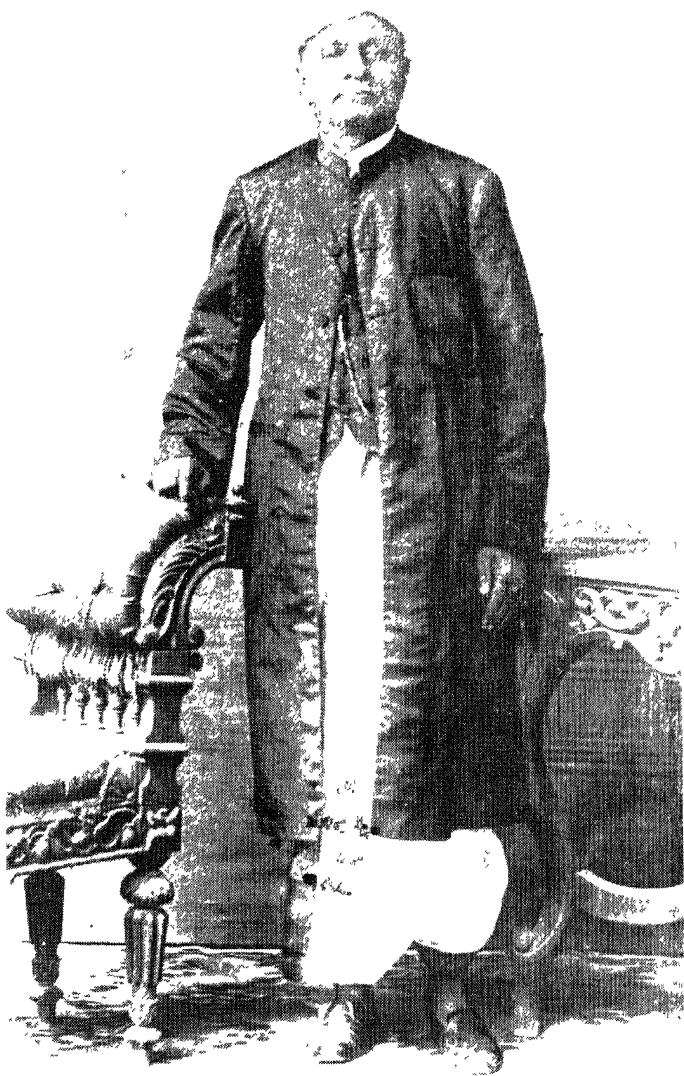






# A HUNDRED YEARS OF THE HINDU



S Kasturiranga Iyengar who purchased The Hindu in April 1905 and was its Editor until his death in 1923.

# A HUNDRED YEARS OF THE HINDU

By Rangaswami Parthasarath

Kasturi & Sons Ltd.  
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**D**EDICATED TO THE thousands of devoted workers who by their selfless service and unflinching loyalty over a long and eventful century made it possible for The Hindu to grow and serve the people, and to the millions of its generations of readers in India and abroad to whom this newspaper is a way of life



# Preface

**I**N WRITING THIS book the author has almost entirely relied on the files of *The Hindu*, old and current, and they have proved to be the most important source material for its history, which is also the history of Indian nationalism. This has been supplemented by valuable information provided by three books, "Revived Memories" by K. Subba Rao, "Kasturiranga Iyengar" by V. K. Narasimhan, and "Kasturi Srinivasan" by the same author. The late Mr. B. Shiva Rao, who served *The Hindu* as its New Delhi Correspondent for over 25 years, helped the author by placing at his disposal the voluminous correspondence exchanged with the Editor, Kasturi Srinivasan, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other prominent personalities of the time and these letters are a mine of information both as regards the power and prestige of *The Hindu* during the British regime and on the course of the freedom struggle and the role played by the newspaper in it. It is a matter for deep regret that this veteran journalist did not live to see the birth of this book, which owes so much to his inspiration and guidance. Shiva Rao himself played a glorious part in the story of *The Hindu* at a crucial moment of its career and that of the nationalist movement and what he did and said as its reporter, guide and philosopher are recorded in the pages of this book.

In order to maintain continuity of the narrative and provide the background, the author has utilised in some places information gleaned from various books which has been acknowledged to their authors. An important source of information for the critical period of 1942-47 are the four volumes on "Transfer of Power" published by the British Government, and the author has been able to make use of them to fill up gaps in the political story.

Besides these, the author interviewed a large number of people who had served *The Hindu* or were connected with it in some way or other, politicians and public men and women who grew with the newspaper and could talk about it with intimacy and love and the ordinary readers to whom it is a part of life. The author wishes to thank them all for helping him so generously in writing this book. His thanks are also due in great

measure to the Managing Editor of The Hindu, Mr. G. Narasimhan, who, alas, is no more, and the Editor, Mr. G. Kasturi, both of whom had entrusted this daunting task to one whose qualification for the job is nothing more than the fact that he served The Hindu for over 32 years and that The Hindu throbs and lives in every fibre of his being. The author is indebted to Mr. N. S. Parthasarathy who took care of the production, Mr. B. M. Duraiswami who read the proofs and Mr. K. S. Rangaswami who helped in getting ready the pictures. He also acknowledges with gratitude the index prepared by Mr. M. P. Govindaraj and his assistant, Mr. K. R. Venkatesan.

**Rangaswami Parthasarathy**



# Contents

1. Six Adventurous Youths	1
2. A Governor in the Dock	9
3. A Benevolent Viceroy	16
4. A National Newspaper	22
5. Birth of Congress	28
6. Congress in Madras	46
7. Two Distinguished Columnists	54
8. Battle for Social Reform	67
9. The London Correspondent—Who was he?	80
10. Devotion to an Empress	90
11. An Editor in London	102
12. The Hindu vs. Anglo-Indian Press	115
13. End of a Great Partnership	126
14. A Giant in Journalism	131
15. The Silver Jubilee	148
16. A New Owner and A New Editor	162
17. A Bank Crash	177
18. Morley's Reforms	186
19. A New King	195
20. The War of Words with Mrs. Besant	204
21. When Emden Shelled Madras	226
22. Britain's Ban on The Hindu	235
23. Attack on the Moderates	245
24. Non-Co-operation	264
25. Pet Lamb of the British Government	274

26.	Battle for and against Council Entry	...	292
27.	End of a Noble and Patriotic Career	...	307
28.	A World Scoop	...	320
29.	Sastri and Princes	...	335
30.	A Grievous Loss	...	346
31.	Fifty Years Old	...	365
32.	Covering the Great Dandi March	...	382
33.	Back to Abnormal	...	407
34.	Geography of Madras	...	423
35.	The Hindu Challenges Gandhiji's Policy	...	438
36.	A Great Son of India	...	451
37.	Dialogue with a Dewan	...	475
38.	The War Crisis	...	494
39.	Diamond Jubilee and a New Home	...	517
40.	Jinnah's Postures	...	527
41.	Failure of a Mission		557
42.	Confrontation with Government	...	585
43.	On the Threshold of Freedom	...	605
44.	Verdict on Nuremburg	...	631
45.	A'Sad Home-coming	...	659
46.	A Foul Assassination	...	676
47.	Problems of Freedom	...	691
48.	Economic Issues	...	703
49.	Hindi Vs. English	...	715
50.	Three Veterans Retire	...	727
51.	"The Boss is Dead, Long Live the Boss"	...	741
52.	The Great Split	...	753
53.	A Decade of Progress and Travail	...	775
54.	Summing Up		789
	Index		812

# Illustrations

1.	S. Kasturiranga Iyengar	Frontispiece
2.	Founders of The Hindu	... i
3.	Facsimile of letter to subscriber by G. Subramania Aiyer	... ii
4.	Facsimile of letter to M. Veeraraghavachariar by Dadabhai Naoroji	... iii
5.	The first Sub-Editors of The Hindu	... iv
6.	Editors of The Hindu	.. v
7.	Editorial Staff of The Hindu (1928)	.. vi
8.	Assistant Editors of The Hindu	.. vii
9.	London Correspondent and New Delhi Representative of The Hindu	... viii
10.	Editors' Delegation to war-fronts (1918)	... ix
11.	(a) Protest against Simon Commission (b) Dandi March	
12.	(a) Picketing in Madras (1930) (b) Gandhiji in London (1931)	x i
13.	Second Round Table Conference	xii
14.	(a) Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose (b) Congress members of Central Assembly from Madras (c) Gandhiji and Jinnah	xiii
15.	(a) Mussolini greets Abyssinian Chiefs (b) Hitler and Neville Chamberlain	xiv

16.	Sir Stafford Cripps and Gandhiji	xv
17.	(a) Maulana Azad with Cabinet Mission (b) Facsimile of Bernard Shaw's reply to The Hindu Questionnaire	xvi
18.	Jawaharlal Nehru being sworn in as Free India's Prime Minister	xvii
19.	(a) Members of the Interim Government (1946) (b) Nehru in jovial mood (c) Nehru and Patel confer with Gandhiji	xviii
20.	(a) Indian prisoners in China (b) Tashkent Pact (c) Influx of refugees from East Pakistan	xix
21.	(a) Pakistan surrender in Dacca (b) Mrs. Indira Gandhi confers with Kamraj (c) Janata leaders	xx
22.	The Hindu Front Page in (a) 1881 (b) 1889	xxi
23.	The Hindu Front Page in (a) 1905 (b) The Hindu crest	xxii
24.	(a) Kasturi Srinivasan being decorated with Padma Bhushan (b) G. Narasimhan being invested with insignia of Padma Bhushan	xxiii
25.	The Hindu Planes	xxiv
26.	How The Hindu featured story of Man's landing on Moon	xxv
27.	Front-page of The Hindu, 1978	xxvi
28.	(a) The first home of The Hindu (b) The present premises	xxvii
29.	Facsimile Transmission of The Hindu	xxviii

# Six Adventurous Youths

1

**S**IX YOUNG MEN of Madras, all of them in their twenties and still fresh from College, founded The Hindu on September 20, 1878. Two of them who later became its sole proprietors, were school masters while the others were studying law. Their names were: G. Subramania Aiyer, M. Veeraraghavachariar, T. T. Rangachariar, P. V. Rangachariar, D. Kesava Rao Pant and N. Subba Rao Pantulu.

They had little capital and no experience of running a newspaper. They all belonged to a society called The Triplicane Literary Society, which was then an important forum for native opinion and which they utilised to discuss current topics. What gave them the idea of starting a journal was the feeling that there was no Indian newspaper to represent Indian opinion and this feeling became stronger when the Anglo-Indian (British-owned) newspapers in Madras criticised in unfair and unflattering terms the appointment of Mr. (later Sir) T. Muthuswami Aiyer as judge of the Madras High Court and they could not reply.

In the words of G. Subramania Aiyer: "Unable to stand this unfairness, six of us joined together and started The Hindu. When we started the newspaper we had no idea of the responsibility of which its publication would involve, of how to conduct it, of the expenditure to be incurred etc. Since we had no money with us we borrowed one rupee and three-quarters and printed and published 80 copies. We wrote that the appointment of Mr. Muthuswami Aiyer was right and we condemned the editorials that had appeared in the Anglo-Indian Press." The Hindu was thus born as a weekly.

The young journalists received support the following week from an unexpected quarter. R. Ramachandra Aiyer (who later became Chief Judge of the Mysore High Court) who had conducted the Madrassee and which had stopped publication, gave them a list of subscribers of the Madrassee and asked them to print 500 copies. Four among the original founders of the weekly left the scene either on entering government service or on taking up professional career and G. Subramania Aiyer and Veeraraghavachariar became the sole proprietors. The former was the Editor and the latter looked after the management.

While letters of encouragement and congratulations poured in from all parts of India, there were not wanting discouraging remarks which, in the words of Veeraraghavachariar, "foresaw many evil consequences from the enterprise;

they considered that the profession of a journalist was hazardous in the extreme and that in the then condition of the presidency could not financially pay its way. The fate of the *Native Public Opinion* and the *Madrasee* which had become defunct was predicted for *The Hindu*. But nothing daunted, we continued to work on.

At the time *The Hindu* appeared on the scene public opinion in Madras Presidency was stagnant and there were very few recognised forums to voice the feelings and grievances of the Indian population. The earliest popular association to be formed was the *Madras Native Association* which came into being in July 1852 through the efforts of a group of English educated Indians. Its object was to investigate and ventilate public grievances and to submit petitions and memorials to the powers that be to redress them. Its first President was Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chettiar. Almost the first thing the Association took up was a campaign against proselytisation which had assumed serious proportions and attempts were being made to introduce the Bible as a text book in government schools. The Association was aided in its work by a journal *Crescent* founded in 1844 by Lakshminarasu Chettiar for the "amelioration of the Hindus". The association became the focal point for an agitation against torture for collecting government dues. As a result of its campaign, a torture commission was appointed which found most of the allegations well founded and suggested steps for their removal. With the death of Lakshminarasu Chettiar in 1868 the association and the paper which he founded languished and died.

Soon after, another journal, the *Native Public Opinion*, was launched owing to the efforts of Sir T. Madhava Rao and Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Rao. Sometime later, A. Ramachandra Aiyer brought forth the *Madrasee* and with it was amalgamated the *Native Public Opinion*. The amalgamated journal fell into the hands of men who were opposed to the general current of educated Indian opinion. One of the things remembered about this journal is its opposition to the appointment of T. Muthuswami Aiyer to the Bench of the Madras High Court. However, it did not live long and another paper of the time, *People's Friend*, suffered the same fate.

And when *The Hindu* made its appearance it became the sole representative of Indian opinion. With its arrival political activity was also revived with the *Madras Native Association* coming back to life under the presidentship of V. Bashyam Iyengar. A number of government officials were members of the association as there was no ban on their participation in public associations. But the position changed when Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff became Governor of Madras in November, 1881. Though no ban as such was imposed, the activities of officials in the association were looked upon with suspicion and many of them left the Association which came to an abrupt end and there was no political association to ventilate the people's grievances till the *Madras Mahajana Sabha* was formed in the premises of *The Hindu* in 1884.

*The Hindu* had as its contemporaries two strong British-owned papers with whom it was to be in perpetual conflict for over two decades. They were the *Madras Times (Morning)* and the *Madras Mail*. The *Madras Times*, founded in 1860 and the *Madras Mail* in 1867, were intended to protect and further the interests of the European community. The *Madras Times* till it was absorbed by the *Madras Mail* had a notable, at times stormy career. It represented the

humbler sections of the European community, the trader, the planter and the smaller merchants. It became a powerful organ later in the century under the editorship of George Romilly who was an uncompromising upholder of the European interests. The Madras Mail, unlike the Madras Times, was aristocratic. It was the paper of the Europeans in the services and the nabobs of the business world. It was suave and sedate and under the editorship of the Lawsons and Henry Beauchamp accurately reflected the mind of the European intellectual. It was run on the lines of the better class of papers in England.

Copies of *The Hindu* for the first three years have not survived and neither G. Subramania Aiyer nor Veeraraghavachariar nor indeed any of those closely associated with their venture has left any diary or narrative or letters connected with the life and progress of *The Hindu*. For a general account of the early days of *The Hindu* we have only the statement made by Veeraraghavachariar at its Silver Jubilee Celebrations in 1903. But fortunately we have in existence the first editorial "Ourselves", which set the tone and temper of the paper in the years to come. It was obvious that G. Subramania Aiyer did not belong nor would wish to belong to that type of Editor in Madras a hundred years before him whose idea of an editor was one who did not take any risk. The historian has recorded that the "well paid editor of the Government Gazette, J. Goldingham, was guided by three rules—first, to write as little editorial matter as he could consistent with being an Editor, secondly, to make that little contain as little meaning as possible and thirdly, not to forget that the use of language is to conceal a meaning."

*The Hindu* introduced itself with a clumsily worded long winding preamble: "In accordance with long standing etiquette obtaining among the journalistic community, we seeking admission into it as a new member, herald our first appearance before the public by a leader rather ostentatiously styled "Ourselves" in which we will presently set forth the circumstances that justify the appearance of a new paper, its professed intentions and aims, the line of policy it proposes to pursue and the principles by which it is to be guided. It is with great diffidence that we usher this paper into existence presuming that the indulgent public will give us a warm reception by supporting and encouraging us in spite of our shortcomings."

Coming to the "Ourselves" part of it, *The Hindu* wrote. "We shall confine ourselves as much as possible to Indian politics. We do not belong either to that class of men who altogether ignore the superiority of Western rule and find fault with everything the Government does or to that of those who are so far carried away by the influence of their English education as to cry down everything native and advocate as a rule the preferability of Western institutions to those of our country. With many Anglo-Indian statesmen such as Sir T. Munro, Sir Henry Lawrence and several others we are of opinion that there has been a tendency on the part of our rulers to interfere too much in the internal administration of the country. We are inclined to be conservative as much as it is consistent with the national progress of the nation. The whole world is destined to be guided by Europe and it will not be desirable even if it were possible to withstand the pressure of the European influence brought to bear upon us by the spread of Western knowledge and civilisation among us. The principles that we propose to be guided by are simply those of fairness and justice. It will always be our aim to promote harmony and union among our

fellow countrymen and to interpret correctly the feelings of the natives and to create mutual confidence between the governed and the governors. In religion though there have been of late occasion to look with unpleasant feelings and suspicion upon the conduct of a particular sect of missionaries, we shall observe the strictest neutrality, sectarian disputes, we shall never allow to appear in our columns. But when religious questions involve interests of a political and social character we shall keep our columns open to any prudent remarks and criticisms"

The Hindu concluded: "If our attempt proves successful we shall have reason to congratulate ourselves, and feel proud that we have succeeded in doing what we consider to be our duty. But owing to a want of encouragement and co-operation from the public, if our attempt follows its predecessors to the 'undiscovered country' we shall retire from the field with the melancholy conviction that the native public of South India are not prepared to support among them more than one native newspaper and beg the pardon of the public for having disturbed their equanimity"

Almost the first man to be charmed and captivated by The Hindu maiden editorial was an Englishman, Surgeon Major Nicholson who resided in St Thomas Mount, Madras. He came in search of the Editor and when he traced him to his lodging in Triplicane heartily congratulated him and his collaborator, Veeraraghavachariar. Referring to this incident Veeraraghavachariar said: "He took us to his retreat at the Mount and gave us valuable advice. Week after week Subramania Aiyer and myself sat at his feet and imbibed his sound and mature views, on various subjects". It is a pity very little is known about the Surgeon Major beyond what Veeraraghavachariar has said and there is no mention of his name in the copies of the Hindu available.

G. Subramania Aiyer born on January 19, 1855 at Thiruvaiyar in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu came from a big family of seven sons and a daughter. His father was a lawyer's clerk and an orthodox Hindu. Subramania Aiyer lost his father at an early age and the burden of looking after the family fell on his mother. After a formal education in school and college he came to Madras and took up the post of a teacher in the Church of Scotland school in 1875 on a salary of Rs. 45 per month. He later joined the staff of the Pachiappa's College and from here he privately studied and passed the B.A. examination of the Madras University. He was offered and accepted while he was only 25 the post of headmaster of the Anglo-Vernacular School (later called the Hindu High School, Triplicane). It was while he was at the Pachiappa's College that he met Veeraraghavachariar who was a tutor there and the two became fast friends. Veeraraghavachariar, who was born in 1857 in a village in Chingleput, was of humble origin. His father was employed in the District court. After passing through the village school, he moved on to the missionary school in Chingleput and later graduated from the Presidency College in Madras.

The early editions of The Hindu were printed in a press in Mint Street, George Town, and then at the Scottish Press. When it became a tri-weekly on October 1, 1883 it was printed at the Empress of India Press but very soon on December 3, 1883 it moved to its own premises and press at 100, Mount Road which was to be its home for over 55 years. The National Press at Mount Road was equipped through borrowed capital. One of the chief benefactors of the Hindu was Mr. (later Justice Sir) S. Subramania Aiyer who had from 1884 taken



a deep interest in *The Hindu* and by his advice and encouragement contributed in no small measure to the success of the undertaking. Veeraraghavachariar said of him "The Hindu can never forget that it was to him more than to anybody else it owes the National Press"

When *The Hindu* decided to convert itself into a tri-weekly, it called upon its readers to help put through the scheme. "In accordance with the repeated advice from many of our countrymen", it said, 'and in the interest of the public welfare, we have resolved to issue *The Hindu* as a Tri-weekly from October next. It is needless to add that the carrying out of the project depends on the response we receive to our present appeal. It is calculated that at least 1000 subscribers and a large patronage in the shape of advertisements or donations will be required to maintain the paper on the proposed scale"

While one reader responded enthusiastically and promised a donation of Rs 100, another was not so responsive. "I hope you will not take it amiss", he said, "When I say that I am almost sorry that you should have undertaken the project without any secured pecuniary help. To one of your knowledge and experience it ought to be pretty well known what it is to rely solely on the support of the native public. In your enthusiasm to do good to your country and in your zeal to supply the long felt want you have certainly miscalculated — by far too much — as to the amount of help and co-operation that the native gentlemen could give. . . . October is a long way off (the appeal was made in August) and as you appeal to my generosity (which I am glad to say I have none in common with my worthy countrymen) I do not mind asking you to register my name for a copy of your tri-weekly in October next. When the tri-weekly is an accomplished fact you may count upon receiving from me two years subscription as a donation"

*The Hindu* in the beginning was a small paper of eight pages in demi-quarto size and was published every Wednesday evening. The date was changed to Thursday later to accommodate notifications and postings from the Fort St George Gazette which was published late on Wednesday evenings. The weekly carried local and national news paragraphs of interest to the reader and there were profuse extracts from Indian and English newspapers both at home and abroad. Letters to the Editor were an important feature but the dominating items were the leading articles, big and small, which covered a whole page and overflowed to the succeeding page. News letters from north Indian centres like Calcutta and Bombay and from mofussil centres like Tiruchi and Bangalore were regularly published. A London letter from its own correspondent was added at a later stage and published in the Leader pages sometimes as an editorial and at other times featured separately under the heading: "Indo-British topics." The identity of the correspondent was not revealed and this led to an interesting development as we shall see later. But the correspondent appeared to be an Englishman and a very knowledgeable person with sympathy for Indian aspirations. Foreign news were lifted from the Anglo-Indian papers and acknowledged as: "From the Dailies".

In the early years until it shifted to 100, Mount Road in 1883, *The Hindu* had no address except care of Post Master, Triplicane and the presumption is that it functioned from the residence of G. Subramania Aiyer in Veeraraghava Mudali Street, Triplicane. Also at the time G. Subramania Aiyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar carried the entire burden of conducting a newspaper on

their shoulders and it was only after some years that three assistants came to share their work. These were K Subba Rao, who besides Veeraraghavachariar, is the only source for information about the early Hindu, C Karunkara Menon, who later flowered into an able Editor, and K Natarajan who became well known as Editor of the Indian Social Reformer.

Describing the early days, K Vyasa Rao said in an article in *The Hindu*. "For the means they had, a weekly was more than they (G Subramania Aiyer and Veeraraghavachariar) could afford." They canvassed for subscribers and demanded at least the quarterly subscription in advance. The subscription was Rs 8 annual and Rs. 2 quarterly. Lacking modern facilities — the stenographer and the typist had not yet arrived — the Editor had to write all his letters himself including those calling for and acknowledging subscriptions.

It seems people in those days hesitated to enclose currency notes with their letter for fear they would be stolen. They preferred to send one half of the notes with one letter, await acknowledgement of its receipt before despatching the other halves. Thus we find the Editor of *The Hindu* writing this letter to the Maharani of Cozzimbazaar. "May it please your Highness, I beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of two half notes to the value of Rs 15 and postage stamps for Re 1 which you were pleased to send towards your subscription for *The Hindu* for the year 1885 and request you will be kind enough to send the other halves at your earliest convenience."

Newspapers then were hand printed. Parcels to the railway stations were carried in juktas (horse driven carriages), the most common form of transport. The roads were not smooth as now and full of ruts. With the arrival of the bicycle newspaper distribution and sales were considerably facilitated.

The Subramania Aiyer-Veeraraghavachariar team worked well at the beginning. Each of them supplied what was wanting in the other. G S was a superb Editor, a master of the pen and a scholar while M. V was an able manager, who was persuasive and tactful and got things done. "The early prosperity of the concern could not have been entrusted to a better combination", wrote Vyasa Rao. "Both of them however anxious to promote the interests of the concern as quickly as it was possible to do felt their way very cautiously. They were content to progress slowly and with such measure of public encouragement as they could obtain without running into hysterics in the conduct of the paper. In the main their anxiety was not to injure themselves or the concern in an effort to establish a sensational reputation."

Some of the influential and wealthy people of those days were the friends and well wishers of the paper. We have already spoken of Mr S Subramania Aiyer and there was the Maharaja of Vizianagaram who was a great patron and who was responsible for enabling *The Hindu* to purchase the rented building at 100, Mount Road which housed *The Hindu* and the National Press. And when in 1897, the Maharaja passed away, *The Hindu*, in dire financial difficulties, was to feel his loss most.

Another notable friend was Nawab Humayun Jah Bahadur, a descendant of Tipu Sultan. His friendship secured for *The Hindu* the cordial appreciation and the support of the Muslim community. The attachment continued throughout the period of the lifetime of Nawab Syed Mohamed, his son, who was for several years a member of the Imperial Legislative Council in Calcutta.

This respect and affection which The Hindu got from the Muslims at the beginning of its career has continued throughout its history of 100 years

The newspaper reading public was not large in those days. The Hindu commented on this in 1881 saying "Very few of us possess reading habits". It added, "The young student works hard till he passes the highest University examination that his circumstances would permit and indeed the desire to disengage himself from the thralldom of books works so strongly in him that he submits his brain to the heaviest work and masters it with extraordinary studiousness. The desire to finish off his studies works with accumulated force and when the long looked for consummation has been reached he takes leave of his books with a comfortable relief. The native official has hardly any time to spare nor does he read newspapers. Newspapers are too costly for him. He must therefore take in four or five of his friends to subscribe for a single newspaper. That it is not always possible for four or five to join together for any purpose is not an ordinary phenomenon among us. Generally, the leading judicial official, the Munsiff or Sub-ordinate judge, more often the former, gets a newspaper and for the sake of courtesy lets it go on circuit through the hands of all readers in the locality. Mind, before the paper reaches the last hand it is nearly a month old and often older. The owner of the paper seldom fails to receive it back in a dirtied and torn state. In localities where there are a number of young minds anxious for information there are sometimes societies started under the patronage of the leading native officials and a few newspapers are subscribed for. But the constituents seldom meet and the papers are sent in circulation. It is not infrequently the case that the publications of Madras are often sent around by post among friends living in different stations in the mofussil. This is the way newspapers are patronised in this part of the country."

The Hindu became a daily from April 1, 1889 as it found that people who had been imbued with the new spirit of nationalism could not wait for two days to read the news of the day. "Our journal, as a daily, will be conducted exactly on the lines on which it has hitherto been conducted", The Hindu wrote "In the future as in the past our watchword will be "onward". We shall always range ourselves on the side of progress, social, intellectual and political. We shall advocate with all our weight and influence such social reforms as are absolutely needed to give unity and harmony to our life under existing conditions even though we know that by doing so we shall array against ourselves in powerful antagonism the followers and upholders of orthodoxy. We shall not spare ourselves in our efforts to promote the spread of education for the real well being of the country will be affected by nothing more powerfully and permanently than by education. And we shall in spite of misrepresentations and of the danger of provoking the opposition and incurring the displeasure of those in authority persevere in the discharge of that most sacred of all duties — the duty of maintaining a cordial good understanding between the rulers and the ruled by acting as an honest and outspoken interpreter between them and of improving the condition of the masses by endeavouring to secure the concealment of whatever is injurious and oppressive and the introduction of whatever is necessary to promote the ends of good Government".

When Bepin Chandra Pal, who was later The Hindu Correspondent in Calcutta, visited Madras in 1881, he found The Hindu had "already become a great

power and an influence for good in that Presidency' He noted that during that period the emphasis of English educated people in India "was not on our respective provincialities but almost exclusively on India's national unity And this helped The Hindu to be accepted from its very birth as an all-India paper even though it could not claim any large all-India circulation".

"The birth of The Hindu", B. C. Pal said, "opened a new chapter in the history of Indo-English journalism not only in Madras but in some sense all over India . . . The Hindu was the first English journal owned and edited by Indians which represented the opinions and aspirations of the English educated community directly in Madras and indirectly of the other Indian provinces also".

# A Governor in the Dock

**I**N A SPEECH in 1903, G. Subramania Aiyer said "The Hindu was started at a time when in the natural growth of the political conditions of the country, an era of public activity was inaugurated by a combination of various circumstances and it fell harmoniously into line with the spirit of the times and the natural sympathy and co-operation that subsisted between both conduced to its marvellous success. It was the duty of The Hindu to create public opinion to reflect it and then to derive support from it, which then it was instrumental in forming. It had indeed its own difficulties and disappointments but the peculiar good fortune of The Hindu was that at no stage of its career did it fail to meet with the cordial and full support of the public and from individuals whom it necessarily offended in the course of the discharge of its duties of an unpleasant nature."

The Hindu came to a head on collision with the British administration and its bureaucrats almost from its birth and in those early years it waged a grim and relentless battle to secure the rights and justice of the people against a tyrannical administration whose fountain head was the Governor, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff. No harsher words have been said of a Governor in the columns of The Hindu both before and after his period of office and no greater indictment of the British rule made in any journal in India. It was an unceasing warfare waged against despotic officials who were encouraged and abetted by a Governor who abdicated his functions to the bureaucracy. The Hindu was merciless in its exposure of the misdeeds and abuse of power during the regime of Grant Duff and some of the brilliant Editorials in the 20 years of the stewardship of G. Subramania Aiyer appeared during the five-year term of this Governor.

"The bane of Indian bureaucracy is the difficulty to get the district officers to carry out your principles in their real spirit", The Hindu wrote in 1883. "They are ready with some flimsy excuse or other for not carrying out your orders. They would say they are overworked and have no time to attend to this or that and yet in the same breath they would suggest as a remedy for all evils that everything should pass through their hands and would oppose to the last the separation from them even the least important of their duties".

The Hindu drew this pen picture of the kind of Indian Civil Service (I. C. S.) Officers who were sent from England. "The people of England", it said, "have

at last discovered that the Indian Civil Servant of the present day is not after all an educated man, nor is he physically and mentally the man to whom the welfare of India may be entrusted. To those who have watched the career of the modern civil servant for the past 15 years, it seems a wonder that Englishmen should have in the matter of mental culture mistaken counterfeit for a genuine coin. During the past 15 years India has made rapid strides in education and while she has turned out young men of nationalities who could compare favourably with students of the Western world, the Indian Civil Service has steadily poured into this country a host of young men far inferior in general attainments to the occupants of the lower forms in any European College. A large percentage (of these civilians) has been found to die prematurely, another portion has succumbed to madness; and a third portion has been got rid of for 'uncouth manners'. The simple fact is that the men selected have sprung from a sphere of life in which people have never been accustomed to command. To quote an expression from some of our English contemporaries, these men might very well follow where they are now expected to lead. It very rarely happens that a man can get out of the habits, ideas and modes of living which he has acquired in the sphere of his birth; and the modern civil servant when put in charge of a station shows by his daily life the class he belongs to in England. The abject niggardliness with which they meet the daily wants of life, the utter self-abnegation they exhibit in attending to their personal appearance or comfort, the insatiable desire to save money, are the undisguised scenes which are daily exhibited. The work allotted to the civil servant in the revenue administration of the country is work which requires intellect of very ordinary calibre for its performance and after a man has spent 10 years in the prime of life in work of this kind which to him is a bed of roses, he is ruthlessly transferred to the bench with unlimited power over life and property in spite of the fact that he has never opened a book of law nor received a day's legal training. . . . When therefore we find that in the public service there is a department which requires not only a strong and sound intellect but a steady application to the study of law as a science and not as a matter to be overcome by spasmodic efforts, when we find appointed to such a task such unpardonable men not mentally equal to the efforts on the one hand and physically enfeebled by a *parsimonious* style of living on the other, it is impossible to deny that climate will contribute its share of mischief and that a few years of service in India will make a maniac or a corpse of a man who ought never to have left his humble station in England to occupy a false position in India. . . . That the prestige of the service is gone is a matter beyond doubt; and while England has done so much towards educating the masses of India it is a matter for regret that the people of this country should look with contempt upon those who for the sake of old England have some claims on us to be looked with a feeling of gratitude if not respect".

What The Hindu said about the British civilians in India proved accurate and very relevant to the happenings in the regime of Grant Duff. Vyasa Rao, a later day columnist, said in The Hindu that Grant Duff's regime was a series of "blunders, sensations and scandals" "His regime was in fact the grant of a gala day for revelry in administrative mistakes, mishaps and machinations some of which fell with a heavy blow on subordinates, who had served Government long, efficiently and faithfully. It was as though a time had come

when the men who held the reins of power had conspired together to have a spree . . .”

Vyasa Rao wrote: “When *The Hindu* made its debut under such bracing conditions, it was treated with scarcely audible contempt, then with ridicule, then with malignity and finally its detractors of all colour and creed, of all degrees of acrimony, disappeared from the horizon one after another and left the country which had become too tropical for them or sank willingly or unwillingly into insignificance. During the time the battle was fought by Mr Subramania Aiyer, he had to find inspiration in his own courage and confidence in the justice of his criticism, he had not a chief to be guided by or a fellow worker to share his responsibility apart from his partner from the management side. Not for a short time he had to be his own captain and soldier, his own scout and commander, his own champion and his own following. He made up his mind from the first that in the country, as perhaps in all countries, the press for a long time to come must not only voice public opinion but must also educate and create public opinion”.

The two most notorious scandals in Grant Duff's regime which shook the Madras Presidency and brought out the qualities of *The Hindu* as the foremost champion of the people's rights against Authority were what were known as the Chingleput Ryots' case and the Salem riots

Farmers in Chingleput District complained that the Tahsildar Seethapathi Naidu adopted coercive methods to collect kist (land tax) and trouble began when the property of farmers in a village in Conjeevaram taluq was attached in May 1881. The farmers alleged harassment because they refused to pay bribe to the Tahsildar. They failed to get redress from the District authorities and they then petitioned the Madras Government. An enquiry was ordered and when the Tahsildar was cleared of the charges against him, the farmers questioned the impartiality of the enquiry. A deputation waited on the Governor Grant Duff and instead of giving relief he allowed the officials to wreak vengeance on the farmers who had levelled charges against the Tahsildar. A village munsiff who had dared to present an adverse report about the Tahsildar was dismissed from service and sent to jail on a charge of giving false evidence. *The Hindu* criticised the conduct of the Governor and said he had allowed the affair to “branch off into episodes, each sufficient to cast dirt on the fair face of British justice”. The paper with the help of some prominent citizens launched a relief fund for the Chingleput farmers. The episode ended only after the Tahsildar, Seethapathi Naidu, himself was convicted in August, 1882 on charges of stealing some incriminating official documents.

“This is a typical case of the official scandals then prevalent in the districts exposed by *The Hindu*”, said P. Kesava Pillai, well known citizen and frequent contributor and correspondent of *The Hindu*. “The people have to be thankful to *The Hindu* for the fact that the number of European and Indian officials who shamelessly exact supplies from their subordinates in the villages is fast decreasing. For *The Hindu* published stories of supply scandals without flinching whether they affected Europeans, Brahmins or Non-Brahmins”.

In a later issue *The Hindu* reproduced a dialogue between an honest Tahsildar and a visitor on what *Jamabandy* meant. The Tahsildar said in reply to a question: “In *Jamabandy*, to begin with, there is the sweetness of feasting one's self at others' expense. Then there is the mamool fee that is to be

collected. And next there is that pleasing percentage on remission. If anybody is accumulating riches when his star is in the ascendant, we say it is 'Jamabandy time' for him. You must know that it is a truism. What is mamool? It is a fee usually given to the Jamabandy officer's staff without murmur by people of every village. The Tahsildar, the revenue inspector and the village officials have all to contribute to it. They of course exact it together with their own mamool from the farmers. You can have no idea as to the amount exacted by this means. It may sometimes be counted more appropriately, by thousands rather than by hundreds for every taluq."

We shall go back to the other scandal during the regime of Governor Grant Duff which rocked the province. The origin of the Salem riots in July-August, 1884, lay in the refusal of the Muslims of Salem to allow Hindus to take out a procession in front of a mosque in spite of Court rulings. The incidents were magnified by Grant Duff as a "seditious revolt". The riots lasted three days and a special judge was asked to try a large number of persons arrested on trumped up charges. A majority of them, including Dr. Manickam Pillai, a respected citizen, were sent to the Andamans after being sentenced to life imprisonment. The High Court confirmed the sentences passed in a majority of cases. Three lawyers including C. Vijayaraghavachariar, who was to preside over a Congress session in later years, worked for two years in Madras to expose the falsity of the charges. Vijayaraghavachariar himself was one of the accused who was convicted but succeeded in proving his innocence. The curtain was rung down on the case when a British judge, Parker convicted for perjury many of those who had helped to fabricate evidence in the case. The Hindu employed a special reporter, P. Kesava Pillai, to report the Salem riots and carried on a vigorous campaign for the release of persons falsely implicated in the case. It highlighted a letter received by it which said that the Collector of Salem was witnessing the races in Bangalore when the riots were raging in Salem and that he had claimed travelling allowance. Grant Duff and his council maintained the "silence of the grave".

In a slashing editorial The Hindu said: "The whole public, European as well as native, were fully convinced that the prosecution of the so called Salem rioters and their convictions were the result of a premeditated design, hastily formed and executed in a vindictive spirit, not very honourable and utterly unworthy of a civilised Government and believing as they do that the high sense of individual honour and public justice so characteristic of Englishmen, has not yet altogether disappeared from the service, they expected that the truth would be brought out during the enquiry into the perjury cases. Their expectation has been realised and we take the liberty of congratulating the judge and the assessors on the conclusion that they have been able to arrive at and that has given so general satisfaction to the public. It has been repeatedly said that the strongest and most enduring foundation of British supremacy in India is the popular conviction that its Government never conscientiously fails to distribute strict and even handed justice among the numerous and various communities of India. That foundation would certainly be imperilled if the method of dispensing justice that found favour with those to whom that responsibility and difficult task was entrusted during the trial of the Salem cases, were allowed to be repeated. Fortunately, the High Court then restored confidence in the public mind to a partial extent and we are sure the judge-



ment of Mr Parker will now complete it and demonstrate to the people that if weaknesses and incompetence in quarters where they ought not to be found, permit unprincipled men to corrupt and mar the channel of justice, there are others happily forming the majority of the administering clan, who discharge their public trust in an honest and god-fearing spirit and work to nullify the evil effects of unprincipled conduct. We have no doubt that Mr. Parker's judgement will have the effect of removing the doubts that may linger in certain minds as to the fiction of conspiracy which the prosecution set up in Salem and as to the intrigues and tyranny of the magistracy and the police by means of which that fiction was worked up to secure the desired results. Mr. Grant Duff unfortunately allowed himself to be employed as a tool in the hands of those ambitious and designing men that wanted to build a reputation on the ruin of Salem and he thereby lost an excellent opportunity to win the grateful admiration of the people. We do not believe he would have permitted all that was done in Salem could he have known previously what sort of men were those whom he chose as the accessories of the design he was led to believe to be necessary in the interest of justice and what means were to be employed in executing it. Now that he is placed in possession of facts upon which he will have to change his opinion of that ugly affair, its origin, progress and end, we trust he will make up his mind to render sufficient reparation to those innocent, useful and honourable men who have been sacrificed to screen the incompetency of some and to gratify the ambition of others". The Hindu ended another devastating attack on Grant Duff with these words: "Oh! Lucifer! How art thou fallen? Oh! Mr Grant Duff, how you stand like an extinct volcano in the midst of the ruins of your abortive reputation as an administrator! Erudite you may be, but a statesman you are not".

But Grant Duff was not moved and the Madras Government yielded only when Lord Ripon, the Viceroy, threatened to expose the Salem scandal in London. Lord Ripon had received a memorandum from C. Vijayaraghavachariar and others when he visited Madras.

Vijayaraghavachariar recalled in an article in the Diamond Jubilee supplement of *The Hindu* that Grant Duff told the people who presented him an address that they should learn to keep their backyards clean before aspiring to political privileges.

The Hindu continued its merciless attack on the Madras Governor and when it learnt that Grant Duff intended to serve out his full term of office it was plainly worried. "We learn from reliable sources", it wrote, "that Mr Grant Duff has made up his mind to remain in India and serve out his full term of office. If this were true, which we would be glad if it were not, we must expect the present sensational state of things to continue for the next 30 months to come. Mr. Grant Duff is evidently determined to make material contribution to the history of South India, to add to it a page of his own. We have seen enough of him as the most important individual factor in the tale of woe of 30 millions of men as the Governor of Madras. . . . If Mr Grant Duff's Indian career has exemplified one fact more than another, it is the little value that mere mental endowments possess among the qualifications for successful statesmanship. Sympathy, felicity, tolerance and above all good health are far more necessary and useful than retentive memory, and accomplished quotations from other authors. Mr. Grant Duff has failed as Governor of Madras and if he still continues as the

head of administration he is enabled to do so not by the acquiescence or supineness of the people".

Reverting to the attack on another occasion *The Hindu* said "This is the secret of Mr. Grant Duff's unpopularity. He has not given a single proof of his sympathy with the people, and especially with regard to the educated classes, we fear, he entertains primitive dislike. We may be doing injustice to Mr. Grant Duff in saying so, and it will give us the highest pleasure to be convinced that we are doing it. But our inference has the concurrence of the whole educated intelligence of Southern India and is based on his speeches and on his administration and legislative measures. His boast of possessing a capacious waste paper basket for receiving the criticisms of the Press, his allusions to 'mischievous tendencies in the air' and the ill-conceived ridicule of all the known aspirations of the educated native community have estranged him so far from educated Hindus, who, Anglo-Indian papers notwithstanding, are the real leaders of native public opinion, that he will have to alter the whole spirit of his administration in future if confidence is to be created in their minds. Again by conniving at the administrative scandals that have brought the Government of Madras into such odium within these three years, he has made himself unpopular to all classes of people throughout the country".

While *The Hindu* used all the vocabulary at its command to indict the Governor and his administration it had nothing but praise and admiration for the lady who was his partner. Commenting on the proceedings of a meeting held under the presidentship of Mrs. Grant Duff in Madras to consider the establishment of a hospital for caste and gosha women, *The Hindu* wrote "For sometime now Mrs. Grant Duff has been taking a lively interest in public affairs as if to make amends for the gruff, unpopular and cynical manner in which her husband had been holding forth. We felt convinced that each succeeding effort only excelled the preceding one in the eminent success that crowned her endeavours. Her eloquence is marked by a persuasiveness to which Madras has long been unaccustomed and the ring of earnestness that always characterised her utterances has half redeemed the unpopularity of her husband".

Apparently *The Hindu's* attack on the administration of Grant Duff had its impact in England for its London correspondent wrote in July 1885. "The Secretary of State (for India) does not evidently think much of affairs in Madras as it is four years since he has decorated any of the leading members of the Government of Madras. This is a subject of comment here. We expected to see Messrs Grant Duff, Sullivan and Masters (Governor and Executive councillors) names down for the honour of companionship of the Star of India to be conferred on the Queen's birthday — but we have looked in the gazette in vain. Why have you in Madras been so troublesome for the past four years? You have most certainly stopped the promotion of your Governor and his honourable councillors. We are told here that owing to the Russian troubles you have this year abstained from asking your troublesome questions in Parliament. Last session or so you asked 38 of the nastiest questions ever put to the Minister. I fear that if the Conservative Government comes into power the radicals will help you still further in pounding the Government of Madras. People, however, think well of your loyalty in refraining from troubling the Government this year. Furthermore this abstention of yours goes to prove that

you Madrasees are really loyal but that you insist on the representatives of England acting towards you as England wishes them to do".

# A Benevolent Viceroy

**P**ERHAPS NO VICEROY in all British Indian history had been so popular and so much lionised and idolised as "Father" Ripon as he was called, not even Lord Mountbatten who is the nearest modern example and the last of the Viceroys. Lord Ripon succeeded a Viceroy whom in the words of The Hindu, "the people of India can never think of without a curse". Lord Lytton was the Viceroy "that gagged their press and disarmed their person, coarsely abused the most respected and respectable leaders of the native community assembled under his own roof on a public business, proposed legislation to close to the natives the door of competition in England for entering the Civil Service, involved the country in a useless and a sanguinary war which added to the national debt and to the pecuniary embarrassments of the Government and repealed the import duties and underestimated the cost of the war in order to bias the minds of the English voters in favour of his political party". "A Viceroy that did these and many more acts of injustice and despotism and left the country without a single soul being sorry for it", said The Hindu, "is not compared to Lord Ripon whose departure from the country took place amid a scene of universal sorrow and enthusiastic attachment the like of which was never beheld before. Lord Ripon's Viceroyalty was a golden period in the recent history of this country. He restored peace, reduced taxation, promoted education, encouraged local industries, introduced measures of relief to the ryots, conciliated the educated classes by giving them an increased share in the administration of their country, in short did more to promote the material and moral condition of the people than many former Viceroys put together. Indeed the immunity from a protracted and ruinous war which India now enjoys is mainly owing to the benevolent administration of Lord Ripon who inspired the people with a genuine loyalty to the sovereignty of England. That loyalty has taught Russia what a dangerous game she was about to undertake in her threatened aggression on India. A ruler so thoughtful, so benevolent and so popular is a phenomenon in Anglo-Indian history".

The Hindu from its inception had made it clear that its quarrel was with the way the bureaucracy functioned in India and it repeatedly affirmed its belief in the indestructible bonds which tied India to British rule. Referring to the bureaucracy The Hindu said: "We have conceived a just aversion to it. It had its days once but there is no doubt now that it has long survived its usefulness.

Its usefulness has disappeared in proportion as the necessity for centralised government has ceased and in the same proportion has it become the object of our hatred and contempt"

The Hindu's contention was that Britain might have produced better results in India "had she proceeded in a spirit of more moral responsibility and sympathy for the indigenous institutions of the conquered country. She began by sweeping them away in one sweep and proceeded to erect a pyramid as if on a *tabularasa*. She wished to realise designs with which people had no sympathy and introduced principles of scientific government which they neither understood nor liked. This innovation was carried in a spirit of reckless haste and highhandedness and though the accustomed subordination of the people to official despotism did not raise a rebellion, yet it alienated the feeling of the people". The Hindu said the system of government "was a separate thing altogether, not cemented to the people at large. They are treated as minors utterly incapable of understanding what their own good or evil is and of seeing through the selfish designs of the bureaucracy"

Lord Ripon attempted to introduce a measure of self-government through his local self-government scheme and thus to make a dent in the citadel of bureaucracy and it is this which endeared him to the Indian people. And when Lord Ripon was taken to task by the Anglo-Indian Press "for pulling down the Empire," The Hindu wrote "The notion that Lord Ripon is pulling down the empire is at best the effect of unbalanced mental conditions and is the catch-word of what Mr. Seely calls the Bombastic School of Politicians. It suppresses the fact that when foreigners were freely admitted into this country without having to produce any certificate of good character the germs of disintegration had begun to be introduced. These germs have all along been growing and might expand into a widespreading upas tree but for large-minded men beginning with Macaulay counteracting the further growth. It is again preposterous to say that Lord Ripon has been sowing the seeds of antagonism of race. The seeds cannot themselves germinate unless a congenial soil had been ready to receive them and everybody knows which has been the soil in which race antagonism has shown a luxurious growth. It is therefore an artless contrivance on the part of the Anglo-Indians to lay at the door of Lord Ripon the faults of their imperfect and offhand assumptions".

The Hindu noted that it was the new impulse that Lord Ripon's policy "has given to the patriotism of educated natives and the awakening in the minds of the people to realities of their political conditions and to the possible hopes and aspirations brightening up their future that has offended the Anglo-Indian community more than anything else in Lord Ripon's Indian administration. They want the ruler of this vast country of 250 millions of human beings comprised within its boundaries to act on the maxim that "charity begins at home", that is to say, they want him first to enrich himself, then enrich his countrymen and if there be energy and philanthropy left afterwards mind the millions whose destinies are placed under his control".

The Hindu went all out to make the farewell visit to Madras of Lord Ripon in January, 1884 before he laid down his Viceroyalty, a glorious event, an occasion for the outpouring of love and gratitude by the masses to a white man whom they revered as a God.

"The report of the Viceroy's arrival has created unusual excitement and joy in Madras", wrote *The Hindu* on the eve of Lord Ripon's visit. "Lord Ripon is the darling of the people upon whose hearts the memory of his name acts like magic. The feeling of attachment to a popular ruler could never have been more prominently manifested by an Indian community than by what the people of this generally dull city are just at present doing. We individually share in the rejoicings of our fellow citizens but our heart swells with delight to behold the scenes of excitement and joy that now pervade the whole community. The sentiments of gratitude so congenial to the Hindu mind has broken out in spontaneous demonstrations and go where you will in this large and scattered city, you behold preparations of different tastes and various degrees of grandeur for tomorrow's rejoicings. The winning contact of joy has spread itself over every part of the city and there is no person, just at present, young or old, educated or illiterate that does not either talk rejoicingly of the visit of the Viceroy or is not actually engaged in assisting in the preparations for tomorrow. It has especially delighted us to behold boys and young men organising themselves into associations, committees, sub-committees and what not and devising diverse emblems and means to manifest their attachment to Lord Ripon. Tomorrow evening will be a memorable occasion in the history of the inhabitants of this city. If they are too poor to perpetuate the name of their beloved Viceroy or their "Father Ripon" as he is popularly called, in bronze or marble they will enshrine him in their heart of hearts and award him in their grateful reminiscences of his good deeds a prize far more valuable than any medal or stone can make it."

*The Hindu* added "we take the liberty to suggest to the local Government to direct the heads of all departments and officers in Madras to observe the day of Lord Ripon's arrival as a public holiday. Such a graceful recognition of the loyalty of the native community by the Government will give them immense satisfaction."

Describing the scenes of enthusiasm and fervour in Madras on the arrival of Lord Ripon on January 31, 1884, *The Hindu* wrote in an editorial: "No onlooker, none that does not possess facilities of measuring the heart and natural feelings of the people can understand, measure or value the scenes that Madras presented yesterday afternoon. It really signalled a new turn in the development of loyalty and political education among the people of India. The mild and law abiding inhabitants of this country have been seldom in their history guilty of harbouring towards the sovereign and her chief representatives feelings other than those of attachment and reverence. To the sovereign's solicitude for the subjects' welfare they have ever responded in reverent loyalty. The good name of Lord Ripon had travelled before him to South India and His Excellency's reported visit had prepared the hearts of the grateful and loyal subjects of Her Majesty for the marvellously enthusiastic and unanimous demonstration that was witnessed yesterday".

*The Hindu* referred to the Viceroy's state drive from the pier to Guindy Park and described the decorations en route. "Madras is not a convenient city for decorations", it said, "and the distance from the pier to Guindy being over six miles the gentlemen to whom the task of decoration was entrusted found it very difficult to execute their task to the best of their satisfaction. Yet every one that saw the reception pandal in the Beach and the tasteful decorations that

beautified the whole route of the Viceroyal procession with triumphal arches, flower pandal etc was struck with the grand and imposing appearance of the Mount Road and the Beach" The Hindu reported the presentation of a civic address to the Viceroy in a decorated pandal at the pier and His Excellency's reply and also the people's rejoicings during the drive. It also mentioned the illumination of private houses and buildings to mark the event. The Hindu printed all the addresses and memoranda presented to Lord Ripon as a pamphlet at its press and offered it for sale. When the Viceroy proceeded from Madras to the southern towns like Chidambaram, Madurai and Coimbatore The Hindu gave an extensive coverage to his tour through its correspondents and published a special supplement on the occasion.

On the eve of the departure from the shores of India of Lord Ripon in October 1884, The Hindu wrote. "He will leave us with an overpowering sense of duty fulfilled, duty to his sovereign and the people whom he undertook to rule. More than that wherever he turns his ear, wherever he meets an assemblage of our countrymen, their hearty plaudits and grateful acclamations will assure him with what feelings they look upon his character, his policy and his achievements. And so our countrymen at Calcutta and Bombay, will we feel sure, emulate our example, and testify to Lord Ripon and the world, when he leaves us, how warmly they cherish his name as their country's noblest and greatest friend and benefactor... Viceroys come and go. During the short tenure of their office even the most zealous of them are able to effect little. The impediments in the way of doing good are many in this country. In the first place they come here at a rather advanced time of life. Then there are the conditions of climate which necessarily impose limitations on the quantity of good that the best disposed of them can do. The laborious character of the work, its extent, its complexity, its multiplicity of detail have further to be taken into account. Last but not least there is the omnipotent bureaucracy to whom in the inscrutable wisdom of Providence the sacred and vital interests of this country are entrusted. It is strong in power and in organisation both here and in England. It guards with sleepless vigilance what it considers its vested interests in this country. By long possession, by inclination, by habit, it has come to see that its interests and those of the country are irreconcilable. And whenever an attempt is made in the interests of the people to storm one of its strongholds of power and profit it offers a bold, spirited and persistent opposition to the assailant and it generally prevails.

"In judging a Viceroy's administration all these difficulties have to be considered. . . What is it that Lord Ripon has done to evoke such sentiments on the part of the people of this country? This is the question of the hour. There are our Anglo-Indian friends who see no merit in him and who, on the other hand, are ready to impute to him every imaginable fault. We are entirely at issue with them on the character of Lord Ripon's administration. We think him at once as the noblest and the greatest of England's proconsuls in India. And why do we say so? We say and we say advisedly that Lord Ripon has done for this country what no other administration has done in this country before or in any other country or age. In four short years Lord Ripon has done in India what in other countries and among other nations it has taken four decades or even four generations. He has created in the short period in the minds of the people of this country an interest in its affairs; he has put into their minds the

notion quite new to them that they have an interest in the manner in which their country is governed; and the fact has come home to them with all the conviction of a scientific or mathematical truth. He has roused them from the apathy of ages. He has brought home to the humblest of us how it is entirely with us that our country is well or ill governed, that we enjoy happiness or misery under our rulers. He has brought home to us how it is our duty to watch public affairs, to instruct our rulers as to national wants, to point out to them their shortcomings and their failures. He has also brought home to us the idea of self-government, an idea quite foreign in its present form to our national traditions and instincts. He has given a shape and a mould to national aspirations and has pointed out to us not only a legitimate goal of ambition but the road that lies to it. One may ask, is it after all an extraordinary thing that the people are now made to take an interest in public affairs? If they did not do so before it was their own fault and if they do so now it is the result of the educational policy of the Government. We are quite willing to allow that a good deal, in fact, almost everything is due to the liberal policy of the state in the matter of education. But it is no ordinary thing that in a people accustomed uncomplainingly and uninquiringly to acquiesce in all the ruler's acts, an interest in public affairs and a habit of public criticism should have been created and it is a much greater merit that they should be taught that self-government is the most proper and desirable method of government for an enlightened and advancing people."

The Hindu said that Lord Ripon as Viceroy had been "the embodiment of certain principles of Indian Government which native opinion ever since it first formed itself has been contending for and against which the anti-native opinion has been declaiming giant-tongued. Those principles have already received the hearty support of leading liberal statesmen in England and should it be asked at any future time what policy of the Indian Government could be best calculated to secure contentment and prosperity in the Indian empire the one that Lord Ripon followed would surely be mentioned in answer". Appealing to leaders of Indian opinion to mark in every possible manner the "immense sense of loss they are sustaining in the departure of Lord Ripon". The Hindu said "It is difficult to see another man in the difficult and responsible position of Viceroy of India, so honest, so single minded and so unselfish as Lord Ripon. And we believe he has been so profoundly impressed with the immense obstructive power wielded by the Anglo-Indian community that he has willingly taken a resolution to devote the rest of his life in England to the advancement of Indian interests".

The Hindu had reason to feel gratified with the success of the Local self-government scheme introduced by Lord Ripon because it was one of the earliest reforms urged by it. Writing in January 1881, The Hindu said: "It is an important and a necessary portion of that great struggle in which we as a nation are at present engaged, of obtaining a right to represent ourselves in the administration of the country, to obtain local self-government in all possible centres throughout the country. The circumstances under which we fight for our rights as Her Majesty's subjects are entirely novel and have no precedents in the history of the world. . . Our demands for representative Government are new and have no precedence in our past history and they are to be put forth in altogether a constitutional manner. Those in whose power it is to listen to



and grant our demands are foreigners, having nothing in common with us and separated from us by thousands of miles of the rolling sea and the immediate rulers who represent our interests to Her Majesty possess vested interests that are opposed to the just and legitimate rights of the people and are entirely devoid of that liberal and generous feeling which alone can sympathise with a foreign people struggling for political liberty. But on the other hand the people with whom the ultimate decision lies in all matters concerning us, are themselves the freest people in the world; they enjoy the precious right in its comparatively purest form, they know its value and they have won it after centuries of the hardest struggle possible. The only difficulty therefore that lies in the way of our reaching the goal we struggle for is the task of convincing them that we are fit to enjoy the rights we demand. . . The agitation must be persistent and zealous for our fitness will be measured by the manner in which we demand concessions. A feeble and spasmodic protest will be only a cry in the wilderness; to be effective it must be loud so as to reach even the heavens and unmistakably strong".

Maurice Dennis Kavanagh, a reader from Ramsgate, England, writing to *The Hindu* in September 1885 bore testimony to Lord Ripon's popularity in India and spoke of his impact on the princes. "He (Ripon) was fully aware", the reader wrote, "that their (princes) kingdoms were entrusted to England's keeping and by his policy of good faith and confidence only equalled by Lord Canning, he has built up in India an indestructible basis of paramountcy of the paramount power of Great Britain. The policy of Lord Clive that India was won by the sword and it must be kept by the sword Lord Ripon eschewed. He was fully aware that a conquered people might for a time seem subservient under force, but when an opportunity availed then they would break the fetters that bound them. . . By his sound policy India is willing to give England her heart and her arm. Lord Ripon's administration has enshrined in the hearts of the natives of India Britain's name and cause".

# A National Newspaper

**T**HE TRI-WEEKLY HINDU was published every Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening and it continued to consist of eight pages in demiquarto size. The printing must be accounted good considering the poor facilities and equipment available in those days. Photography was still a rare art. There was no news display, the art of make-up and lay-out was hardly known. The lino-type machines had not yet come to Madras which had to wait till the second or third decade of the present century. But shorthand, so essential for reporters, established itself in Madras by 1880 and a writer has quoted Dr. C. R. Reddy as saying once jocularly that Madrasees were known for their shorthand and long tongue. The typewriter however, came later and when it did proved a great blessing to reporters.

The first page of The Hindu was an advertisement page and it was so during its long history until in the 1950s the then Editor, Kasturi Srinivasan, brought the news on to the front page in line with other front rank newspapers of the world. Page two carried news paragraphs and notes and extracts from the Indian Press. Page three was the editorial page with the main editorial running to two or three columns and very frequently favoured correspondents' articles also found a prominent place on the same page. City news and letters to the Editor were found on page four and mofussil news and extracts from foreign (British) Press occupied page five and the other three pages carried advertisements. Legal reports were accommodated as and when they were available.

There were no staff correspondents but voluntary correspondents in mofussil centres and north Indian towns who wrote to The Hindu periodically on the events and developments in their areas. They especially concentrated on official parties and functions and speeches by dignitaries and top officials which, in the absence of a political climate, were the main focus of public attention. In an appeal to the writers of newsletters The Hindu said: "Those who are kind enough to send us newsletters will double their favour if they try to send them a day or two earlier than the date of issue wherein they are intended for insertion. The letter should be short and should contain the latest and the most interesting information regarding the condition of the people or of any important social or official occurrences. Trivial occurrences must be omitted"

The Hindu had a capable and a truthful band of voluntary correspondents at all the important South Indian centres where it circulated and also in Bombay, Poona, Calcutta and Delhi. These correspondents sent a regular flow of news and comment and they provided a complete picture of men and events in the country and what was wanting in their reports was supplemented by extensive extracts from the contemporary newspapers in India, mostly British owned. It was through the correspondents' reports that The Hindu was able to expose the misdeeds and abuse of power by officials and follow them with unassailable editorials.

There was not much of news telegrams, Indian or foreign. There was really no news page, which The Hindu was to develop much later, and what rendered The Hindu a very readable and interesting journal were its spirited leaders written in professional, chaste English but with verve and passion and the letters to the Editor written by the leading men of the educated class of Indians.

An interesting advertisement carried on page one in 1884 ran as follows "My controversies with the High Court of Madras in the matter of criminal law forming some of the alleged grounds for my removal from the Madras Civil Service by John Wallace, Re. 1 Apply to Addison & Co".

From the very beginning of its career as we have seen The Hindu had a correspondent in London whose weekly letters were carried on the Leader page, under the heading: "Indo-British topics". We have already referred to what the London correspondent wrote about The Hindu's campaign against Governor Grant Duff. Here is what he said about how questions on India were answered in Parliament. "The impression is sought to be produced", he wrote, "that Parliament keeps a kind of watch over the Indian administration and that these conversations of members with the responsible ministers of the crown would at least exercise some wholesome restraint on Indian officials disposed to indulge in occasional abuse of their power. Well, nothing can be more erroneous than such an impression. A careful perusal of these conversations would at once dispel the illusion and drive us irresistably to conclude that the whole system is practically little better than a sham, a well got up masquerade, a show intended to deceive spectators equally with the actors".

The relevance of these remarks will be evident when it is realised that in those days the eyes of Indian patriots were turned towards the mother of Parliaments where they devoutly hoped there was greater sympathy and response for their aspirations and where the friends of India in the ruling race were much more numerous than in India.

Turning the pages of The Hindu in the 1880s one finds an extraordinary amount of interest evinced in and hopes pinned on the debates and questions on India in the two houses of the British Parliament. It was seldom that there was no leading article in any issue on something or other that happened in Parliament, or was said in Britain which was of interest to Indian readers. Comments in the British Press on Indian topics and Correspondents' reports from India provided ample material for the editorial pages of The Hindu.

The letters to the Editor were well written and high-lighted the burning topics of the day, political, social and economic. Here is an example of an interesting letter, written in 1884 which complained of censorship of private letters during the Grant Duff regime. The writer, described as "a Mofussil

Gentleman" wrote "There is an impression abroad, here and elsewhere that letters addressed to newspapers and gentlemen in England are often opened in Government post offices. This impression has been gaining strength since the unfortunate occurrence of the Salem riots. The extreme unpopularity of Mr Grant Duff's administration and the very reprehensible conduct of several Europeans seated in the curate chairs of bureaucracy have given rise to such strong animadversions in the leading journals of the day and several native gentlemen of high social position have been forced to express their opinions so freely that some government officials jealous of their reputation and not of their honour and bent on mischief are suspected of having recourse to the reprehensible conduct above mentioned. I for one cannot believe that any Indian administration however contemptible it may be otherwise will stoop to so nefarious a practice"

Another letter which was headed, "Black sheep among our countrymen, talebearers and spies", sought to expose those Indians who carried on tales and intrigues against Indian officials in high position and "thereby cause immense damage to the nation we belong"

It was the habit of the Editor of *The Hindu* to reply to correspondents briefly at the head of the column which carried letters to the Editor. This practice continued for a very long time and it was a convenient way of avoiding postage and clerical work. The replies mostly told the writers of the rejected letters "Declined with thanks" but sometimes there were interesting comments. For instance, Xavier was told: "The thrashing is well deserved. Kindly communicate to us the name and position of the thrashed". To a Hindu patriot: "Nothing will come out of your anonymous shafts against the Tahsildar in the papers. Let the aggrieved ryots assemble in large numbers and lay before the Government all their sufferings from the tyrannical conduct of the officer. Surely the Government will do justice to the cries of the ryots. The Chingleput scandal is still fresh in the memory of the people and the Government".

*The Hindu* was a national newspaper from the beginning. The news and views it presented covered all India and it devoted equal attention to international events. Thus it wrote a number of leading articles on the affairs of the Calcutta Municipal Council and its dispute with the Government. It reviewed the administration of native states in North India like Patiala, Bikaner and Indore in the same way as it did of Travancore or Mysore. On the international front it once wrote on the situation in Cuba and on another occasion on the Sudan.

The Hindu's interest in local and civic problems was intensive and beneficial. Nothing escaped its eyes where the welfare of the citizen of Madras was concerned. It may seem curious and ununderstandable that *The Hindu* once opposed the proposal to have electric lights on the Marina (beach). But it gave its reason for its opposition. "We are glad", said *The Hindu*, "that the proposal of Mr. Arundel, President of the local Municipality, to light the new Marina in the beach, and the Banqueting Hall by means of electric light, has been knocked on the head. . . . The proposal if carried out will cost Rs. 10,000 to the Municipality in addition to a grant from the Government; and a sum of Rs. 10,000 to be thrown away in adorning a place frequented mostly by Europeans, the wealthiest of the local residents, whereas

other parts where most of the ratepayers, the real contributors of the money live, are so dirty that they are not fit even for pigs to wallow in. Has the Municipality so much money that it does not know how to spend it and that so much as Rs 10,000 can be spent on beautifying the Banqueting Hall and the Marina with electric light?

The Hindu's effective and descriptive reporting was seen in the People's Park fire outbreak during the Christmas Fair in January, 1887, in which a great number of lives was lost and valuable property destroyed. The Hindu brought out a supplement to announce the tragedy to its readers with these banner headings "Fire at People's Park. Frightful Loss of Life"

The Hindu report said. "There were thousands of people enjoying themselves at different parts of the Park witnessing the Christmas Fair. The chief centre of attraction, however, was the circle within enclosed by the round of fancy bazaars of diverse description. In the centre of the circle is situated as many of our readers know the bandstand with a small raised platform outside it. There were four gates of admission on the four sides. The whole spot appeared gay and lively; men, women and children clad in their choicest holiday attire and bedecked with all the ornaments at their command joyfully walked round and round, now trying their luck in a Japanese shop, now witnessing the white monkey and now entering a refreshment room. Many of the gentry, European and native, after going the first round stopped within the band enclosure. Shortly after 6 p.m. there appeared a flash of light simultaneously at two pandals, one of which was near the Vepery Gate and the other near the Salt Cottaur Gate and in a moment the fire spread to the adjacent stalls. No sooner was the alarm raised than the panic spread among the people within the enclosure and terror reigned supreme. If the crowd had only exhibited a little presence of mind and behaved in an orderly manner, the ultimate result would not have been as disastrous as it actually proved. There was a rush from every quarter but mostly on the Vepery Gate where the fire was raging.

"The people who were outside the fatal circle rushing towards the gates leading to the bandstand, prevented the escape of the unfortunate sufferers and thereby added to their confusion and dismay. Helpless women with children in their arms, fathers with their little boys and girls, fled bewildered, rushed upon the gates and booths and many escaped and alas! many perished. Those who by accident were at a distance from the fire and chose the shortest cut saved themselves. Those who were at the bandstand and others that repaired thither were beyond the reach of the fire. But others whose lot it was to remain near the conflagration and who rushed in hundreds in hopeless despair in the face of the flame fell victims of the raging monster and were burnt to death. The tins of kerosene oil in some of the booths contributed to the rage of the fire and accelerated the destruction. People were crushed and trodden to death, helpless women and children having suffered most in this respect. The work of destruction was over in a few minutes but we can never forget the piteous cries and groans of the dying and the wounded and the loud wail and lamentations of the anxious parents and relations that stood outside the circle crying to heaven for help. We saw in every direction children bewailing the loss of their parents and parents those of their children, and husbands, wives, distant relations and friends had all

their eyes turned towards the fatal spot with intense anxiety and despair, not knowing how many of their kith and kin had succumbed to the deadly fire. They cursed the hour when they entered the Park. The scene was one of unparalleled misery and woe."

The Hindu report then spoke of the work of gallant gentlemen present whose attempts to save lives "are beyond all praise". It particularly mentioned one C. V. Sundaram Sastry and said, "Many an unfortunate man and woman whose clothes had caught fire and who would inevitably have perished in the flames was saved from a cruel death by the intrepid conduct of our fellow citizen and he did not desist from this self-imposed task of humanity till his own right hand was badly scalded. It is impossible to state even approximately, the number of killed and wounded. Many were removed to their houses by their friends shortly after the catastrophe and there is no means of ascertaining their number. But we understand on the most reliable authority that the number of corpses in the park and the hospital was 330. We may assume that the number of wounded was at least as great and God knows how many of these unfortunate beings are destined to survive the shock. We have not had time to ascertain the names of those killed."

There is no mention in The Hindu report of any fire engine or ambulance or of any attempt to put out the fire. The point was raised by a reader the following day while giving more details of the ghastly tragedy. "When we have had a terrible lesson from the recent Tinnevely fire and when everyone shudders at the idea of it and in such a popular place as the Park", he asked, "why could there not be more than one fire engine ready for action?"

The Police Commissioner, whose report to the Chief Secretary to Government on the fire was published in full by The Hindu, said that fire engines were brought on by the Police but there was great difficulty in obtaining supply of water; the fire really burnt itself out. The Commissioner gave these figures of casualties; found dead in the Park: 283, died at their own houses: 42, died in hospital: 80. The Commissioner said "The loss of life has been terrible, but chiefly among the better classes. The Chettians have been the greatest sufferers".

An enquiry ordered by the Government of Madras into the Park Fire tragedy was conducted by the Coroner, Eardley Norton and one of the witnesses examined was the Rev. Dr. Miller, Principal of the Madras Christian College, who said he saw a man moving in suspicious circumstances in the fair after the fire outbreak.

A reader in a letter said, "My surmises are entirely verified by the evidence of H. E. the Commander-in-chief. In his evidence before the Coroner he quite nonchalantly admits that he was the first to make his way out after the commencement of the fire, as indeed nobody requires to be assured that a man of his high position would be the first to find his way out if he wished it. He gives his evidence as though he was only a sightseer come from the heavens, ready to go as soon as the sightseeing was over, as though he had nothing to do with things mundane, as though the monthly disbursements from the Indian Public Treasury did not go into his pocket to the tune of Rs. 5,000 a month with "allowances", as though he was not the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army and as such not responsible for the safety and well-being of the inhabitants of Madras. I call upon all readers to reflect whether if His Excellency the

Commander-in-chief had remained within the band stand enclosure and tried to call in the panic-stricken crowd into the enclosure and afforded them every other facility and help in the way of finding them proper escape there would have been so many deaths from the effects of the fire and much more of crushing by the sheer pressure of the maddening crowd "

The Park Fair was not revived until after a lapse of 15 years in 1901 Welcoming the revival, The Hindu recalled the grim details of the tragedy and noted that besides the loss of life there was also an enormous loss of property in looting in which "even the guardians of the peace are believed to have joined with alacrity. When the fire was on and people were running or attempting to run for their lives all possible advantage was taken by the wickedly inclined and by the thieves in policemen's clothes to loot as much property as they could find, even from the persons of women and children who were struggling to save their lives. It would be impossible to estimate the amount of crime that was committed on the dreadful night and the amount of property lost"

# Birth of Congress

ONE OF THE earliest tasks of The Hindu had been to rouse the educated Indian public from its lethargy and indifference to political and social questions and to instil the fire of patriotism in them. It became its sacred duty to create public opinion and to lead it on national and healthy lines. It was not happy with the Indian scene as it saw it in 1883. "In common with other countries India naturally expects that her educated and intelligent sons would take the lead in her social and political upheaval", The Hindu wrote. "A great many useful things are expected of them and we entertained very high hopes of reform from such of our educated countrymen at least as had attained high social position and distinction. We are sorry to record — what we have very often done — that as regards the bulk of them we have been disappointed. Our heart droops within us when we find that in majority of instances those from whom we expected a great deal are utterly devoid of any feeling for their country and are supremely indifferent to the moral, social or political changes that take place around them. What is still worse the majority of them throw cold water on any scheme that recognises these changes and seeks to convert them into a gain to the nation. Our educated countrymen instead of coming to the front as pioneers of progress are hiding their heads in supreme indifference. Instead of taking the lead as they ought and should they are by their conduct calculated to bring discredit to their mother country, retarding the onward progress of civilisation in India. Energy, independent spirit, good and exemplary public life and other sterling good qualities which our educated brethren could give to the country if they liked, are withheld notwithstanding that the country stands in great need of them. What can we say or do to infuse feeling or energy, in short, life into them?"

The Hindu reverted to the same theme in another way when it wrote in 1884: "We consider it a misfortune that to any educated mind doubts should appear about the propriety or expediency of confessing unreservedly, readily and on all sorts of occasions the faults of our national character; for the matter is really one relating to truthfulness and candour as individual and national qualities. But yet there is a reason why some thoughtful and honest men yield to the pressure of circumstances and regard it as a prudent course not to expose the blemishes of our nation and of educated men in particular. The reason con-



sists in the ungenerous and unfair conclusions which Europeans, the ruling caste, come to and often act upon on the ground of these blemishes. They generalise them, recognise no exceptional cases and make us suffer for our faults more severely than we merit. It must be admitted that in moral courage, presence of mind, mental and physical endurance, the people of India are inferior to those of Europe. But the same cannot be said of all classes in India. In certain individual cases these good qualities may be found to a larger degree in an Indian than in an European. Yet we see what political disabilities have been attached to the people of this country because those qualities are assumed not to exist. It has been taken for granted that the natives are not fit for responsible executive posts while the success of the native administration in adjoining independent states is daily being brought to the notice of the ruling class. "Armed with irresponsible powers these are apt even under circumstances which give equal claims to natives and Europeans to favour their own interests to those of the people. But when there is an apparent ground for underrating the moral qualifications of their rivals, they find it naturally more easy to justify their selfish conduct. Moreover, the people of this country are being constantly taunted for this and that fault by writers in the Anglo-Indian Press so that sensitive persons feel their sense of national honour wounded and wishing the fault to be absent, come to think that they are actually so. Thus the ungenerous and unfair attitude of a number of the dominant class and the sensitiveness of some among ourselves give a colour of prudence to the policy of concealing or glossing over the faults of the nation in assemblies attended by Europeans. If the Hindus have faults, Englishmen do not pretend to be free from them. On the other hand, there are certain excellences in our national character which foreigners whose opinion is worth having, have praised and admired. Therefore true love of the country does not consist in concealing its faults but in frankly and willingly admitting them and courting suggestions in order that they may be remedied".

The Hindu strongly believed that the political consciousness generated among the Indian people during the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon should be nurtured and developed into a powerful expression of the voice of all India and perhaps it was one of the earliest organs of public opinion in the country to urge the formation of a national party which subsequently led to the establishment of the Indian National Congress.

The Hindu wrote on December 26, 1884: "It must be very gratifying indeed to the leaders of native society, to whose public spirit and organising skill is due the marvellous success of the late efforts to give the policy of Lord Ripon's administration the stamp of national approval, that the foes as well as the friends of our progress comprehend fully the significance which the movement was intended to convey. It was not merely the manifestation of our gratitude for the manifold benefits that the late Viceroy's administration has been the cause of; our more prominent object was to prove to the world the existence of a powerful native opinion, which is not incapable of organisation and which has acquired a consciousness of its importance and strength. It is the culmination in an epoch of political advancement of the hitherto unperceived work of a number of forces which each separately and conjointly contributed to their result and to which the incidents of the past administration imparted a special life and vigour. It was intended to prove that a stage has

been reached in the political education of the people when the old order must be made to yield to the new and the fabric of benevolent despotism having survived its days of usefulness will have to be dismantled in some of its chief centres. There are many who refuse to believe that the people have been making progress such as entitles them to political power; and others there are who believe in the contrary. Lord Ripon was of the latter and brought to bear a sympathetic and earnest mind on the tendencies of the times and understood at once that he might begin a new departure . . . We should not allow the effects of our first success in giving united and emphatic expression to public opinion to vanish. Men of light and leading among us must sedulously foster the first beginnings of national life and by keeping it sufficiently engaged lead their countrymen to fresh victories. They know they have materials to work with and just as they found it possible to utilise them for a great object on one occasion, they can do the same in future for other objects of equally great importance to the country. There are questions on which public opinion is undivided. But from want of organisation we have not been able to demonstrate its unanimity and strength and to open the eyes of the English public. We need not tell our readers that in England there are many influential persons who will gladly place their services at the disposal of their Indian fellow subjects. But as we have repeatedly said they are unable to adopt any organised procedure from want of definite and reliable information. They are diffident of their own ability to deal with the difficult problems of Indian administration and knowing as they do how authoritatively the India Office and its mouthpiece the Secretary of State can speak, they are afraid of a crushing defeat in raising a debate on any Indian subject. The first thing we must direct our limited efforts to do is to procure the extinction of that effete and obstructive body. We know how it is looked upon by statesmen in England and it will not survive, we are sure, the first blow if it be given with sufficient strength and skill.

"There are other questions upon which the opinion of our countrymen is equally unanimous. One or more of these should be taken up and we should give such an emphatic and united expression to our opinion upon them that Parliament or the English public may find it difficult to mistake it. The simplest method of securing such expression will be to affiliate the numerous associations that are scattered all over the country with a common mother association, so to speak, consisting of persons representing different parts of the country. This association will ascertain and organise public opinion and embodying it in a memorial numerously signed forward it to England. Our friends in England will then find in the memorial so forwarded facts and figures which no official browbeating can overcome and relying upon such unsailable authority they will find it comparatively easy to face the unintelligible and embarrassing jargon of the India Office. After what has been witnessed in Bombay (the reference is to the popular send-off given to Lord Ripon on his return home) to which people came from such distant places as Karachi and Salem, the worst pessimistic among us cannot regard our suggestion as chimerical. We are confident that those who enjoy the privilege and honour of leading their countrymen in the path of progress fully recognise the signs of the times and will do their best to achieve our common objects with what materials and facilities exist to help them".

In another clarion call to its countrymen on the same theme three or four months before the birth of the Indian National Congress, The Hindu wrote under the title, "Wanted a National Party": "Public opinion in our country has till now contented itself with an attitude of passive resistance to evils rather than one of active organised aggression on vested political interests. Men of light and leading have thought that their duty to the country is discharged by making occasional protests against abuses and wrongs by putting forth spasmodic and unorganised efforts in the shape of newspaper articles, occasional public meetings and memorials. These things are indeed excellent in their way and are entitled to high appreciation for the influence they have exerted on the rulers both in this country and in England. But they are not enough and quite unequal to the task of counteracting the power of the vast resources which our opponents are able to command. Our voice has been the voice of an applicant before a tyrant armed with despotic powers instead of that of a nation enjoying the rights and privileges due to the subjects of the English sovereign and to the position of a British citizen. It has been faint and unsteady and has never collected courage enough to enunciate its demands in a firm and effective language. Once in the history of modern India, on the occasion of the departure of the last Viceroy, did Indian public opinion show itself capable of organised and impressive expression. That occasion showed what potential energy and power of joint action the scattered forces of Indian patriotism possessed. It is now the duty of our politicians to collect these forces into the centre of a powerful and widespread organisation and bring to the front that national party which now wastes its resources by working without a common and well understood programme and without methods and appliances chosen after joint deliberation. Such an haphazard way of working not only involves a frittering of our means but also renders our friends in England comparatively powerless for good. The national party must learn more to confide in itself and place more faith in its own position and its principles of action. It must know distinctly what its wants are and publish its programme both for its own guidance and for the information of its friends and well wishers and whenever it speaks it must speak in no faltering, in no doubtful tone. Of course, the programme will have to be arrived at after much thought and inquiry, it must be framed under a full knowledge of the principle that our demands will command attention, only to the extent that they are reasonable. But after satisfying ourselves that they are such we must enunciate and uphold them in a spirit indicating honest conviction and self-confidence. Public opinion will have to be educated, if necessary, with respect to the subjects of reform and when once the national party will have enlisted reason and public opinion in favour of its movements our friends in England will be able to appeal to it as their authority. They will no longer allow themselves to be browbeaten by clever Secretaries and Under-Secretaries who are willing instruments in the hands of the huge manufactory of lies, the India Office. The selfish and narrow bureaucracy of India will no longer be accepted by the English public as the final authorities on questions concerning the affairs of the millions of this country. They will no longer find it possible to pose before the English public as not only infallible and disinterested guides in directing the Indian Government but also as the virtuous champions of the voiceless masses of this country. . . A good deal of non-

sense will of course be talked about the impracticability of our programme and about the indifference of the people properly so called to the various reforms put forth. The leaders of the movement will be denounced as the enemies of the British Government, their authority to speak will be called into question as if these gentlemen that come to this country in search of a livelihood and who run back home the moment they amass sufficient money, had better authority and less interested motives to speak on behalf of the people whom while in India they use merely as a tax paying machine. Such nonsense will be taken for its worth and when the voice of the people speaks unanimously and aloud . . . We must admit that there are some even among us who believe that they perceive signs of impatience and hurry among the more forward of their countrymen at present. We need hardly say that these are not the men that have bestowed their best thoughts upon the subject. With the best of motives they too readily accept as accurate the analogy suggested by the history of political advancement in England. They argue that because the people of England laboured hard for so many centuries to acquire the measure of political liberty that they now exercise, the people of India must also pay the same price for their liberty. Now, there can be no greater fallacy than an argument of that kind. It entirely ignores the values of the lessons that the history of the older nations furnish to the younger ones. England had to construct her own constitution, no lessons of past history, nor any extraneous examples having helped her in the task. She had therefore to proceed haphazard as time and circumstances dictated. She had no system and no design. She had to invent her own principles together with the method of their application and the means of their execution. The constitution of the English Government is at best a growth of continuous patchwork and consequently her Parliament is one of the most cumbersome and unworkable political machinery that can be fancied. . . . Having the experience of England and the whole world before us, we should not follow identically the same path that other countries which had not the advantage of that experience were obliged to follow, nor need we apprehend the same evils that attended or threatened the growth of European Governments. The Indian statesmen have the plan, methods and appliances ready to their hands and they ought to be able to achieve in a generation what those of other countries found it difficult to do in the course of a century. Our term of apprenticeship need not be so lengthy and so full of difficulties and risks as that of other peoples in past times. To our judgement, therefore, the charge of impatience and haste brought against our leaders of political movements is based upon no proper data. We have only to overcome the opposition of vested interests and if we do our duty honestly and manfully and if we show that our voice is the voice of a loyal and united people, we can be confident of fair treatment from the great English nation who have ever been distinguished for their generosity and love of justice".

The Hindu's reference to those who talked of the dangers of impatience and haste was really a reply to an English friend of India, the well known scholar and educationist, William Porter, who as the Principal of the Government College in Kumbakonam had found a niche in the hearts of many eminent and brilliant products of that college. Opening the Town Hall in Kumbakonam named after him in January, 1885, Porter said that whenever he happened to

meet any of the "fiery young patriots of this Presidency" he urged on them the need for patience and the necessity of time. 'A nation, I said,' Porter went on, "grows slowly and you must try and carry the people with you and not run away too hastily from the old ways of the country." Porter referred to The Hindu's remarks that "native opinion has attained an unexpected volume and organisation" and asked "The question is what will you do with it"? Porter felt that the future depended on the success of the experiment of local self-government to which they should devote their attention and in the meantime they should "abstain from loading the ryot with heavier responsibility" (namely of representative institutions). Porter said "The truth is our leaders in the great cities are living in an India of their own imaginations and not the rural India which constitutes nine-tenths of the whole population. If I may borrow a phrase from Mr. Gladstone, I think I must say of them they are up in a balloon. Now it is of no use to ask for other instructors. The towns have always been the teachers of the country and will continue to be so till the end of time. As we cannot dispense with our guides, let us at least wish them a safe voyage down to earth again where they may live in contact with facts and figures".

The Hindu's reaction was swift and severe. 'Mr. Porter', it wrote, "is a great man in the estimation of a section of the educated community of Southern India. As one who was for a long time the head of an important educational institution and had considerable share in moulding the minds of the rising generation and as one well known for broad and generous views and looking with sympathy on the political aspirations of the progressive section of the native population, he justly commands the attachment and respect of a large number of Hindus". The Hindu said "We must at once say that we admit the necessity of patience in seeking progress and are fully aware of the fact that a nation grows slowly and by degrees. But so far as we have been able to gauge the feeling of our countrymen we see no indication of undue haste or of a belief that a nation can grow by leaps and bounds. On the other hand, if the wants of the people, and the extent of available materials for building higher on the old lines are considered, we think there is reason to complain that even educated men are not sufficiently earnest and they indulge too much in their national disposition to apathy". The Hindu went on: "Actuated by the most intense solicitude for our welfare he has unconsciously misinterpreted us to the public of southern India. . . . We certainly thought we had a right to expect Mr. Porter to know better and that what many do from unworthy motives, he would not do from want of knowledge, from incorrect appreciation of the situation and from want of careful preparation. Now Mr. Porter's complaint seems to be that educated natives live in ignorance of the actual condition and wants of the ryots, that they want representative institutions before the ryots are fit to share with them the responsibility of working such institutions and that with Lord Ripon's scheme of local self-government the educated natives must be content as at present furnishing the only safe instrument of political training". The Hindu said: "We see that Mr. Porter is carried away by names. He sums up the present object of native ambition to be the establishment of 'representative institutions'. Evidently the expression must have brought to his mind the English House of Commons and the American Senate with all the electioneering processes, party struggles and other popular and

democratic excesses that characterise political life in England and America. Otherwise how could the mere expression, Representative institutions, frighten a thoughtful mind like Mr Porter's?"

The Hindu explained that what popular associations in the major towns had complained about was that popular voice had little control in legislation and financial administration. There was no demand that the provincial Legislatures should be reconstituted on the model of the British House of Commons or that there should be a larger number of men taking part in their deliberations. "Yet", The Hindu said, "it is in this light that Mr. Porter seems to have construed our suggestion that some principle of representation must be adopted in making nominations to these councils. . . Nobody has proposed a scheme of self-government. Educated natives are fully aware that in the direction of self-government it is enough for the present if the people prove themselves worthy of the privileges which Lord Ripon's scheme has given them. But how does this scheme prevent the public from complaining of their legislature being a sham institution? And is it a sin to ask government to do in an effective and genuine manner what they have been professing to these so many years and have done in an indifferent and ineffective manner?" The Hindu added "The public have no confidence in the council as at present constituted and it is necessary that it should be reformed so as to command that confidence"

The Hindu published a number of letters protesting against Porter's speech. One of them started like this "Some of my educated friends will remember my having protested with them against making an idol of those Europeans who have come out to India to earn a living and have had the tact of patting on the back of natives brought into contact with them during their service. That Mr. Porter in the Education Department has won laurels, for which he was paid, I should be the last man to deny. But memorials and pujas are due only to those higher orders of Englishmen and native gentlemen who have disinterestedly, voluntarily, and under great opposition upheld the rights and promoted the aspirations of the Indian people — of whom Sir Thomas Munroe, Mr. Fawcett and Lord Ripon are the brightest examples. Mr. Porter at the Town Hall has unveiled himself more than he has unveiled Mr. Gopal Rao's portrait. I am sorry I am unable to accord to Mr. Porter's speech at the Town Hall even the weight of a genuine conviction".

Piqued at the fact that Porter's speech came in handy for Anglo-Indian journals in their campaign against native intellectuals, The Hindu said: "Mr. Porter is the unique specimen of a friend who so spoke like one that is a declared enemy, that does not scruple to embitter feelings, does not hesitate to gloat over faults and indents largely on his resources of wit, humour and levity how best to scorn and scoff". The Hindu allowing for Porter "the most earnest desire to afford paternal advice like the wise parent who could not catch up the wildest reports and unattested rumours about his hopefuls and proceeds to chasten or chastise" asked: "Did he behave like those indiscreet and impulsive fathers who wield the bludgeon on the slightest and least supported complaints conveyed to them by their children's spiteful companions?"

On December 12, 1885 The Hindu announced the birth of the National Party for which it had been campaigning so vigorously. It said that the Indian

National Union would hold a Congress in Poona. "The Congress will consist of representatives from different centres in India. The three Presidency Towns (Madras, Calcutta and Bombay), Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra and Lahore are all expected to send a suitable number of delegates to attend the Congress. We believe there will be more than a hundred representatives and from the nature of the case they will constitute the very cream of the intelligent section of the native community. Though the Congress is held this year in Poona, it is probable it may be held in Calcutta or Allahabad next year. The object of the Congress would be patent to all observers of the signs of the times. It is to bring to a focus our scattered political energy and to give solidity and organisation to native opinion. It will also show that the people have come to that stage of political education when they can of their own accord and without the support and sanction of government meet together in a central place, discuss the burning questions of the hour intelligently and in a temperate tone and arrive at practicable resolutions. It will completely disarm our opponents who assert that the people are not yet capable of being entrusted with political power and responsibilities. We have not been able to learn exactly what the business of the Congress will be this time. But we may assume that it will consist in the discussion of topics in which without local differences all parts of the country are equally interested. Such topics will be the abolition of the India Council, the reformation of the Legislative Councils, the separation of the Executive from the judicial functions, the reduction of military and civil expenditure and the admission of natives into the higher branches of the administration. These are subjects on which native opinion at present is absolutely unanimous and the Congress will bring to a focus and to a point of organised force which now exists scattered in various centres."

It was announced on December 26, 1885 that "owing to a few cases of cholera that have occurred in Poona, the National Congress will be held on December 28, 29 and 30 in Bombay instead of in Poona". The Hindu prominently carried the story, "Exclusive to The Hindu", of the opening of the first session of the Indian National Congress in Bombay under the presidentship of Mr W C Bonnerjee. The report said: "Seventy-one delegates from Bombay, Poona, Surat, Ahmedabad, Karachi, Madras, Ganjam, Masulipatam, Chingleput, Kumbakonam, Madura, Tinnevely, Coimbatore, Cuddapah, Anantapur, Bellary, Calcutta, Benares, Agra, Allahabad, Lucknow and Lahore and several visitors were present. Resolutions were unanimously adopted, first that the Congress recommends the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the working of the Indian administration here and in England, Indian people being adequately represented thereon, and that all available evidence should be taken in India and England, secondly, that the Congress considers the abolition of the India Council a necessary preliminary to all other reforms. The question of Legislative Council reform next came up for consideration but the Congress adjourned before adopting any proposition." To G. Subramania Aiyer, Editor of The Hindu, belonged the honour of moving the first resolution at the Congress.

The Hindu rejoiced over the success of the first session of the Congress and said "Young India has entered on a new phase in its political career and December 28 will for ever be remembered as a memorable day in the annals of our national history. The present and coming generation will remember

that day as the one on which the National Congress, the first of its kind known to this country and which promises to be the forerunner of several political changes India is soon to witness, held its first meeting in Bombay, one of the great centres of trade, enlightenment and patriotism. The idea of some of our educated and patriotic countrymen inhabiting different parts of the country and speaking different vernaculars, meeting at a common centre to discuss their national wants and to find remedies for the grievances which their country is suffering from, might have looked chimerical sometime back, but such a thing has been accomplished and it is a glorious day that has witnessed its accomplishment. In spite of the strenuous efforts of our Anglo-Indian opponents to stifle our national life in its very cradle, it has grown with accumulated vigour and has become strong enough to bear any amount of opposition unscathed. When offering their opposition to the first significant appearance of the signs of national life in the country, our Anglo-Indian brethren little understood the nature of the present tide. Their selfishness made them blind to all considerations which a study of the progress of nations must have put into their minds. In the height of their perverseness they believed that the inhabitants of this country were necessarily incapable of progress and were strongly wedded to their ancient traditions, little caring under what kind of Government they were, provided they remained undisturbed. They forgot that the East was the land of the dawn of civilisation and the first abode of man and though its civilisation had become stagnant owing to several causes, the nation only required a little goading to enable it to enter on a progressive career. They believed that the seal of immutability had been stamped on our national life and that a change would never come.

"We are sure to hear a good deal said against the representative character of the Congress and the impracticable nature of its proposals which form the stock arguments of our opponents, but we may safely assert that those who are present at the Congress have a much greater right and are more competent to speak on behalf of the Hindu community than those who are likely to take objection to their action. The opposition will come only from a quarter which has the least right to say anything on behalf of their country and which makes India a source of personal gain and bases its line of action in furtherance of that one object, a quarter the fate whereof would almost be sealed if any progressive reform is introduced in the present system of Government. Any comment issuing from such persons would receive from honest administrators only the consideration which the motives actuating it would entitle it to. The Congress is composed of persons whom adverse criticism from whatever direction it may come cannot scare away and whose action cannot with impunity be misrepresented. Some of our best men are there and the Government in spite of all that may be said by the interested opponents of progress will certainly not deem it fit to shelve any proposal which is the outcome of mature deliberations of such an intelligent body. If we have understood the signs of the times aright we feel that this year's Congress is to form the nucleus of a grand national assembly, the councils of which will weigh with the Government of this country in moulding its action in all matters connected with its well being. We have the strongest conviction, that the sending of delegates from India to England and this meeting at one centre of delegates from all parts of the country are the pre-runners of a great political change.



This political power, this desire on the part of the inhabitants of the country to raise themselves in the scale of nations, cannot go without producing beneficial results in the near future. Our countrymen must only work with patience and be constantly advancing on the road to progress and the present generation is, we believe, destined to witness great constitutional changes. We, therefore, welcome the Congress with all our heart".

Thus began The Hindu's close association with the Indian National Congress which was to continue until after independence. During this long period it was to be a champion and defender of the country's foremost political organisation, providing a platform and a forum to espouse and spread its cause and programme, acting as a wise counsellor and a clever tactician in the battle for freedom, infusing courage and determination when the odds were against the people and sounding moderation and caution when fissiparous tendencies were on the ascendant and always standing four square like the Rock of Gibraltar against the onslaughts on the great national organisation from whichever quarter it came, from the rulers and the ruling race and from among our own countrymen. Three of its famous Editors were active participants in the promotion and growth of the Congress while another equally famous Editor, following an independent policy, supported and helped it in striking ways which elicited the warm tributes of Gandhiji and other Congress leaders.

After the second session of the Congress in Calcutta in 1886, The Hindu drew attention to the calumny spread by the Anglo-Indian Press and other interested parties that the Muslims were keeping away from the Congress and said this in fact was not true and it mentioned the number of Muslim delegates who attended the Calcutta session. The Hindu also revealed the interest and sympathy shown in the new political organisation by Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy but it did not disclose the all important fact that Lord Dufferin was the man responsible for the formation of the Congress as a political organisation or more correctly as a standing opposition to the Government. It was to be revealed in the columns of The Hindu many years later by G. Subramania Aiyer.

Reviewing the Calcutta session of the Congress, The Hindu admitted that the representation of Muslims was not as adequate as one would have wished. It said: "The first Congress which met in Bombay was got up rather hastily and there were only a few Mahomedan representatives. We remember how the London Times magnifies the significance of this circumstance and did our fellow Mahomedan countrymen the injustice to remark that they did not sympathise with the aspirations entertained by the Hindus. This time more care was taken to remove this defect and if the number of representatives is any sign of the spirit of the intelligent Mahomedans, we must say that the Congress has their full sympathy. Our enemies can no longer say that the Hindus have been deserted by their Islamic brethren for the fact cannot be denied that from every part of the Indian Empire, from Bengal, from Allahabad, from the Punjab, from Bombay and from Madras and, what is more to be noted than any of these, from the native state of Hyderabad, the centre of Mahomedan power and influence, there were representatives or messages of sympathy received at the Congress. It is absolutely untrue therefore to state that the Congress was the Hindu Congress as a Calcutta paper maliciously put it or it has not the sympathy of the Mahomedan community". The Hindu added: "We do not indeed

satisfy ourselves by the 35 or 40 Mahomedan gentlemen who attended the Congress. They represented indeed all parts of the empire, they were among the most influential and respectable citizens of the provinces they respectively come from and they were authorised to speak in the name of the local communities. Yet if we had atleast twice the number that we actually had the Mahomedan community would have been more satisfactorily represented. That community represents one-fifth of the Indian population and out of 400 delegates we should have a fair representation of the community, 80 gentlemen, to represent it. But it must be remembered that they are not so far advanced in the matter of general and political education as the Hindus and the fact will in the minds of honest persons, reduce the hostile significance of the small number of Mahomedan delegates. The Mahomedan community is not so wanting in commonsense and common honesty as to share the sentiments put forth by their self-styled exponents of Calcutta. They cannot possibly believe that by giving expression publicly and jointly with the Hindus to their wants and wishes, they will either injure their own cause or be acting disloyally towards the Government. Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra answered fully (at the Calcutta Congress) the many objections which Messrs. Ameer Ali and Abdul Lateef urged against the Congress, but the most satisfactory reply is that the Government themselves, represented by the Viceroy, do not attribute any effect to the Congress such as our Mahomedan dissenters do. We are assured that Lord Dufferin thinks that the public and authoritative expression of enlightened native opinion such as the Congress gave utterance to is of great help to the ruling authorities. The position of the British Government in India is peculiar in that it has no direct and regular access to the opinions and feelings of the leaders of the native community, but this want the Congress supplies to a great extent. And it is a valuable proof of the sagacity and sympathy of the present Viceroy that he took the opportunity of the presence at Calcutta of the many distinguished citizens of the various parts of the empire and invited them to a free and confident interchange of views with him. His Excellency indeed could not officially recognise the Congress. The Congress is the outcome not of any regular enactment, or administrative ordinance but of the spontaneous energy and patriotism of the educated Indians. Lord Dufferin therefore felt it difficult to recognise in his official capacity the existence of an institution which aims at the subversion of the existing arrangements. He nevertheless manifested his sympathy with the spirit of the movement by inviting the delegates to his house. Had Lord Dufferin thought that the Congress was the outcome of disloyalty on the part of the leading spirits, or it would hamper the Government in any way in carrying out those measures of reform that have been already initiated, he would not have been so friendly with them as he really was. And whatever may be said by persons whose interest is to perpetuate the present political thralldom of the Indian people, the Viceroy is not likely to have a high opinion of the intelligence or public spirit of the men that set such an anti-national example to our Mahomedan fellow subjects. It must strike them how foolish it is to keep aloof from a movement which aims at the common good of the country, at the advancement of the Mahomedans as well as of the Hindus and which the Viceroy and a number of officials of subordinate positions approve and welcome. The enemies of Indian progress will no doubt commend the good

sense of these gentlemen in having declined to join the Hindu movement but their commendation being prompted by the despot's maxim of divide and rule, they cannot but rejoice inwardly how they have successfully duped them. "And do our Mahomedan countrymen approve of their leaders being duped in this way by certain designing men? We do not doubt that they as well as the Hindus have the good of their native country at heart. Well, if they think that the objects of the Congress are not calculated to realise this good their duty is as honest patriots, not to hold aloof but to co-operate with the Hindus and direct their movement towards the ends that they approve. If they find it hopeless to persuade their Hindu fellow citizens to follow their own lines of reform then they will be justified in disowning the Congress. Messrs Ameer Ali and Abdul Lateef have done nothing of the kind. On the other hand, there is reason to think that they have been induced to adopt an attitude of apathy by an imperfect understanding of the Congress. They probably feared that these were revolutionary and intended to transfer the power of Government to the hand of a few agitators. We need hardly say that the promoters of the Congress had no such objects in their minds and on the other hand they were particularly anxious to avoid every ground for the shadow of an apprehension on this score. The objects of the Congress have now been published to the world and so far as we have seen none of our enemies has been able to take the least objection to any one of them on the ground of its being immoderate or revolutionary. It is due to the country of their birth and to themselves that Mr Ameer Ali and his friends should now convince the world that their predictions and fears about the results of the Congress have been fulfilled. Nor can they now comfort themselves that their example has influenced the whole community. By far the major portion of its intelligent section evidently feels as interested in the successful issue of our present efforts as Hindus themselves and those that are ambitious of retaining their influence on the people must act in a manner that will commend itself to their intelligence and be consistent with the interests of the country."

Eighteen years later in June 1905, after The Hindu had acquired a new proprietor and Editor in Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar, its late Editor and veteran Congressman, G. Subramania Aiyer in a letter to the paper cleared the position regarding Lord Dufferin and the Congress. He said "The story that Dufferin sketched a scheme which was placed before the Congress and unanimously accepted by it was not true. The only story known to the leading men of the Congress is as follows and was stated by Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee in an introduction he wrote for a book called "Indian Politics" and published by Messrs G. A. Natesan and Co. of this city in 1898. It was Mr. Hume who inspired by a general feeling that was appearing in the minds of many Indians after the Ilbert Bill agitation, conceived the idea of an annual assembly of leading Indian politicians once a year in some important common centre for the consideration of Indian questions and making representations to Government. He worked out a practical scheme which included the idea that the Governor of the province where the Assembly was held should preside over its deliberations so that greater cordiality might be established between the official class and non-official Indian politicians. Early in 1885 Mr. Hume when at Simla saw the Marquis of Dufferin who had in the December previous assumed the Viceroyalty of India. What followed we shall give in Mr. Bonnerjee's words:

"Lord Dufferin took great interest in the matter and after considering it over for some time he sent for Mr. Hume and told him that in his opinion Mr. Hume's project would not be of much use. He said there was no body of persons in this country who performed the function of Her Majesty's opposition in England. The newspapers even if they really represented the views of the people, were not reliable and as the English were really ignorant of what was said of them and their policy in native circles it would be very desirable in the interests of the rulers as of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved and he added that an assembly such as he proposed should not be presided by the local Governor. For in his presence the people might not like to speak out their mind. Mr. Hume was convinced by Lord Dufferin's arguments and when he placed the two schemes, his own and Lord Dufferin's before leading politicians at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and other parts of the country, the latter unanimously accepted Lord Dufferin's scheme and proceeded to give effect to it. Lord Dufferin had made it a condition with Mr. Hume that his name in connection with the scheme of the Congress should not be divulged so long as he remained in the country and this condition was faithfully maintained and none but the men consulted by Mr. Hume knew anything about the matter".

We can now understand why *The Hindu*, although its Editor was fully aware of the part played by the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin in the emergence of the Congress, satisfied itself with barely indicating Lord Dufferin's sympathy with the Congress when it wrote its leading article on the attitude of the Muslims to the Congress at Calcutta.

Lord Dufferin's sympathy with the Congress did not however last long. By the time he laid down his office he had become a bitter critic of the national organisation of which he was a foster father, and when in one of his farewell speeches in Calcutta in 1888 he criticised the Congress, among other things, for not devoting sufficient attention to social subjects, *The Hindu* defended the Congress vehemently. "It (the speech) appears to us," *The Hindu* wrote, "to be wanting in courage, to be wanting in tact and sagacity for which he (Lord Dufferin) had always been given credit, that he should have spoken so bitterly about a popular movement at the moment of 'his dissolution' as he said. When he invited to his house the delegates of the second Congress in Calcutta and entered on a frank conversation with them on various political questions he did not give them the smallest hint as to his attitude. On the other hand what he said then left an impression that he was in sympathy with the Congress".

*The Hindu* said: "But of all men in India the Marquis of Dufferin was expected to be most scrupulously fair in dealing with a question which engages the sympathy and active exertion of almost the whole educated population. He took advantage of a festive occasion and an invitation from a community which is as a clan the declared opponent of the political advancement of the people and passed a severe one-sided and incorrect judgment on a popular movement conducted on the most rigidly loyal and constitutional lines. It is evident that he did not take the trouble to read the official reports of the Congress which would have given him a correct idea of its objects and aims; but was content to receive his ideas about them at second

hand, probably from the letter of Sir Auckland Colvin and from those "statesmen of weight and importance" such as Rajah Siva-Prasad and the so called Rajah of Bhinga, we suppose. And upon the impressions thus received he has based his criticism. And there is no wonder that the judgment thus based on the one-sided evidence of hostile witnesses is incorrect and harsh. The intention of the Congress has entirely been mistaken and objects and methods are attributed to it which it never put forward. In one place the Congress is said to be desirous of taking "a very big jump into the unknown by the application to India of democratic methods of Government and the adoption of a Parliamentary system". In another place the Viceroy asks in a language of indignation and eloquence: "How could any reasonable man imagine that the British Government would be content to allow this microscopic minority to control their administration of that majestic and multiform Empire for whose safety and welfare they are responsible in the eyes of God and before the face of civilisation?" In a third place the Viceroy says: "I hold it absolutely necessary, not merely for the maintenance of our own power but for the good Government of the country and for the general content of all classes and especially of the people at large, that England should never abdicate her supreme control of public affairs and delegate to a minority, to a class the duty of providing for the welfare of the diversified communities over which she rules". Well, is there anything in the resolutions, or in the speeches recorded in the official reports of the Congress which lends the faintest justifications to the ascription of such objects to the Congress? If there was anything, the Viceroy might have quoted it and made the Congress party blush at its own indiscretion and recklessness. The Congress is fully sensible of the function which the British rule fulfils in the development of India's destiny and of the fact that it 'alone possesses both the power and the will to weld the rights and status of each separate element of the empire into a peaceful, co-ordinated and harmonious unity'. In fact, from its earliest days the Congress has amply acknowledged that it owes its very birth to this character of British rule. How is then the Viceroy justified in attributing to it motives and tendencies directly opposed to those it has repeatedly and publicly declared? The Viceroy has misunderstood the ideal that has been authoritatively put forward. He describes it erroneously when he says that it is to be a "representative body or bodies in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of purse and who through this instrumentality, shall be able to bring the British Executive into subjection to their will". It is true that the Congress proposes that the elected members of the reformed councils shall be at least one-half of the whole and that all legislative measures and all financial questions shall be "submitted to and dealt with" by these councils and that the power of interpellation and of debate on the replies received shall also be conceded. But to meet the objection that was anticipated and has been raised by Lord Dufferin, the Congress provides power to overrule any decision arrived at by the councils and that between the Indian Executive and those councils, to the Secretary of State in the first instance and a standing committee of the House of Commons finally shall be the arbiters. How does this proposal of the Congress transfer the power and function of the British Executive to a 'Microscopic' native minority? Will England 'abdicate her supreme control' under such an arrangement?

After all, it must not be forgotten that the Congress does not intend its suggestions to be final. If the Viceroy had carefully examined the various resolutions of the Congress as indeed in fairness he was bound to do before he publicly came forward to censure it, he would have noticed that these suggestions are only tentative and that it prays Government to inquire into the subject and if necessary modify the plan of the Congress. The Congress does not want the Government to accept its suggestions in toto but they are put forward in order to meet a possible objection on the score of indefiniteness. The Congress fences its programme with sufficient limitations, but only its detractors in the heat of their sentiment rush to conclusions without making a careful inquiry beforehand. We can understand the rabid hirelings of the opposition pursuing such a course, but the Viceroy speaks under the most profound responsibility and we very much regret that Lord Dufferin did not seek better counsel before he committed himself as he did in the Calcutta Town Hall."

Referring to the Viceroy's criticism that the Congress had neglected social reform, *The Hindu* said "To charge the Congress with having neglected these and other subjects is as reasonable as to charge the Public Service Commission with having neglected the reform of Hindu marriage laws. The Congress does not exist for objects of this kind. It has set before itself a programme of a political character. It endeavours to create and foster a feeling of national unity and it clings to the conviction that in only a political platform can all the different parts of the Indian population combine and co-operate. Politics have little to do with sanitary reform or industrial education. The Government can get all the help it expects and wants from the educated classes in those latter respects, and yet the Congress can go on maturing its programme. The two stand on different bases and in judging of the merits of the Congress movement the omission of the subjects can have no value whatsoever".

C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem in an article in the Diamond Jubilee supplement of *The Hindu* mentioned Lord Dufferin's notorious speech when the Viceroy said in reply to an address that Indians were not fit for political freedom because they drank the water from the same tank in which they bathed.

When Lord Dufferin's proposals for the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils were published in March, 1889, *The Hindu* welcomed them, saying: "Lord Dufferin's dispatch on the reconstitution of the Legislative councils would be read with considerable satisfaction throughout the country. The dispatch sets forth a scheme which is on the whole fair and which affords an adequate field for the education of the leading citizens and for the exercise of their political talent. We do not say that a more liberal measure cannot be undertaken without detriment to the interests of the public or to the ultimate supremacy of the British authority in the administration of India. Still, it is due to Lord Dufferin to acknowledge most cordially the sympathetic though cautious view he takes of the whole question. He does not, like some of his countrymen in India, look upon the present system of administration as perfection itself and that any deviation or change will upset the foundations of British supremacy. He recognises that change is an essential condition of well-being and that as the education and intelligence of the people expand a modification becomes necessary in the political institution originally designed for a more backward condition of the country. The Congress is in entire

accord with Lord Dufferin in respect of the fundamental limitations which must qualify any scheme to confer increased political liberty to the people".

The Hindu then proceeded to analyse the features of the constitutional scheme and criticised the provision for a majority of nominated members in the Legislative Council instead of half the total strength being elected as suggested by the Congress.

The Hindu realised that the increasing popularity of the Congress meant that every effort would be made by the British bureaucracy to suppress it, kill it. It wrote towards the end of 1888 "The Indian National Congress will strike roots deep into the hearts of the people, will expand and grow and in the fulness of time will bear fruits leading to the health and beauty of the empire, its rulers and subjects. One thing and only one thing can kill it, namely, the suppression of it by the English nation by sheer force. The Congress has not yet become a sufficiently powerful factor in Indian politics to make its suppression a practical question, but there is reason to believe that unless the English nation takes the matter into its own hands, the Indian bureaucracy will willingly and before the Congress attains maturity avail itself of this serious step. It is well known that the *Pioneer* is the organ of an influential section of the officials and only a few days ago it advocated in the interests of the safety of the empire the forcible suppression of the Congress. The Congress has truth and justice on its side and its objects are pushed forward by constitutional and peaceful means. Neither argument, nor law nor counter organisation will avail in counteracting the advance of the Congress. It is strong in numbers and within a few years millions of people will be enlisted among the active workers for the accomplishment of its objects. Against a movement so based and so guided no ordinary remedy, or some of the remedies directed against unlawful or mischievous movements will prove useful. Arbitrary force is the only weapon which will be of service to those that dislike the Congress and there is no wonder that such a pronounced bureaucrat as Sir Auckland Colvin (Governor of U.P.) brandishes the weapon over the heads of Congressmen. To Sir Auckland it is almost self-evident that in India unrestrained freedom in political matters will lead to mischief. We may assure him ever so strongly that he is mistaken but he will not be convinced. This bureaucrat's point of view is not the good of the people but the interests of himself and his caste.

"A desire for power, wealth and honour is not the monopoly of any nation and if the Indians are, at this moment, animated by this desire, they are only doing what other nations in the world have done at one time or another in their history. It is of course possible for the rulers to put down this natural and wholesome ambition. In India it is much easier than in other countries. The miserable division among the people, their apathy and want of union and the immense power and prestige that the ruling class wield make it only too easy to crush any attempt at national self-emanicipation. If the British Government abandoning all its instincts of generosity and love of freedom nursed during ages of glorious struggle against arbitrary power, would make up its mind to throttle the nascent Indian movement, the Indians have no alternative but to submit with resignation. Of course, the English nation knows better than any other nation in the world that such a policy will only be followed by a nemesis which will be thorough and unsparing in its revenge. To suppress

the National Congress after the fashion of the Russian autocrat will mean infinitely more than the disappearance of the annual meetings that have become phenomenal in the country during these four years. The liberty of speech, of the Press and of conscience which are the foundations of British freedom and which have reconciled the Indian people to their present foreign rule will have to be withdrawn. Schools and colleges will have to be abolished, private and public meetings will have to be forcibly dispersed and a system of espionage such as disfigures Russian despotism will have to be adopted. Indians will have to be prohibited from seeking British platforms for ventilating their grievances and hundred other things which will be wholly inconsistent with the political spirit of the past century and with what England herself has done in the past for the advancement of the Indian people, will have to be done. We do not believe that the English nation will stoop to ruin a dependent people in this heartless fashion, unless indeed a fatal malady leading to a rapid downfall has overtaken that glorious race, the parent of freedom to all the countries of the world. If England will thus ruin her great dependency which is the real bastion of her power, prestige and wealth and will disregard all the moral and material consequences that will follow, India will quietly submit, of course, as she submitted in the past even to worse despotisms. This is all, of course, our imagination. England has not deteriorated in her character and she knows as well as she ever knew that her prosperity and power depend upon the contentment and happiness of the Indian people. Nothing can be a stronger support and bulwark to British supremacy in India than a united and self-respecting nation which will rally round it in critical times for self-preservation as well as for gratitude. Sir Auckland's threat only betrays the weakness of the cause of which he is a distinguished advocate. No basis of Government can be permanent which drives its best and most sober defenders to the advocacy of brute repression when the most moderate departure from it is in prospect".

That the fears of The Hindu of bureaucratic hatred of the Congress were not exaggerated were proved when it published a letter from a reader in the North-West Provinces (as Uttar Pradesh was then called) in the same year. This reader wrote "The most potent forum of opposition to the Congress on the part of our official body finds expression not in words but in acts, namely, Government patronage. In these days a man has only to make known that he belongs to the anti-Congress party and his wordly success is sure to follow. He may either write to the *Pioneer* condemning the Congress, of course, giving his full name and address as a ready means of recognition or he may get up an anti-Congress meeting, make a long speech there and the next day send a garbled telegram to the official paper. It is ten to one that he will find his name in the next *Gazette* as a newly appointed Tahsildar or an honorary Deputy Collector. . . . The state of our country in matters political has come to this pass. God knows what is next in store for us".

The action of Sir Syed Ahmad, a Muslim leader who actively supported the English in order to promote the welfare of his community and who tried to wean away the Muslims from the Congress, caused The Hindu to bemoan his attitude as unwise and unpatriotic. "We were hitherto under the firm belief", it wrote, "that the Congress carried with it the entire sympathy of all the Bombay Mussalmans. It is certainly a disappointment, more, and grievous to



see that even there are exceptional instances of men who blindly follow Sir Syed Ahmed's blind leadership. But our cause is a holy, national cause. We who support the Congress are firmly convinced that we are in the truest and best sense in the service of God. The prophet of Islam said on a memorable occasion 'Here am I in thy service O' God'. So we are too. Here are nations and communities gifted by God with every physical, mental and moral endowment which has ever enriched and elevated human nature sunk in the depths of political degradation. It is one of the marvels or miracles of history, we, the Indian people, Hindu or Mahomedan, should have for centuries lost altogether the feeling of nationality. Sir Syed Ahmed wants to carve out a distinct Mahomedan nationality. The brain of man never concocted a greater chimera. The achievement was impossible during the palmy days of Mahomedan rule in this country. The Aryan nationality began to re-assert itself vigorously after a long period of decay though it had never been blotted out of existence altogether. If the feat was impossible in the days gone by it cannot be possible now after centuries of Mussalman degeneracy. . . Our hopes therefore of the revival of Indian nationality depend entirely upon our unity and powers of organisation. And after all we see no reason why Mussalmans should on account of religious differences cease to be drawn into bonds of sympathy and unity with the Hindus. Our Congress movement is demonstrably a thoroughly practical movement, and Mussalmans if they are true to their traditions and if they aspire to regain their lost prestige ought to be able to recognise this. Its sole object is to unite the scattered fragments of Indian nationality and to give to our aspirations distinctness, consistency and breadth. The English people respect those who respect themselves. We ask Sir Syed Ahmed and his followers to consider whether they will not suffer in the eyes of the civilised world and bring their community into discredit by saying that they will not join a movement whose objects are essentially and avowedly national and not selfish and sectarian and whose proceedings and aims have so far met with the countenance and approbation of all thoughtful men in England and the British public generally."

# Congress in Madras

**T**HE THIRD SESSION of the National Congress was held in Madras in December 1887 under the presidentship of Badruddin Tyabji. Describing the session a correspondent wrote in *The Hindu* "The august national assembly that met at Mackay's Gardens on the eve of the New Year is worth the earnest study of all students of Indian politics and no attentive observer who, in spite of the malignant influence of the tropics, is able to judge aright could fail to be struck with various interesting features that distinguished the third National Congress. It may be — and the fact may be readily admitted — that it is yet defective in some respects. And it would be of immense service to us to form a proper estimate of its capabilities and shortcomings. How admirably this Congress has improved upon its predecessors and what "conquests and trophies" it has achieved in the third year of its life deserve to be distinctly noted down. The indifference of the wealthy rajas and zamindars of our country towards this movement and the absence of the aristocracy from the list of delegates was made much of by our critics and their inborn apathy to everything outside their personal emoluments and power was in this case wantonly construed by our opponents as proof positive of their dissent from the programme of the party of reform. Thanks to the intelligence and patriotism of the native princes and zamindars, thanks to virulent Anglo-Indian criticism for having put us on our guard — the reproach has been wiped away from the third National Congress. No longer would it be true to repeat that between the National Congress and the hereditary nobility there lies an unbridged gulf. It is an open secret that the enlightened Maharaja that rules the historic kingdom of Mysore, who has already conferred upon his subjects the nucleus of representative Government for which British India is all along agitating, made a princely donation in token of his sympathy with the objects of the Congress. Travancore and Cochin followed suit and kindly responded to the call of the Madras Committee. To the Raja of Venkatagiri belongs the credit of being the first nobleman that forwarded a handsome contribution to the expenses of the Congress. The presence of the Maharaja of Vizianagaram and His Highness' sympathy with the Congress is a significant fact upon which friends of reform may well congratulate. Since his ill-considered flattery of Sir Grant Duff's unhappy regime and his foolish reference to the "jujune warblers of the Native Press", this is the first time that His Highness appears in a public

assembly with advantage to himself and deserves commendation for the new leaf which he has turned. It would not be wounding the susceptibilities of His Highness if I mention my pleasure at seeing His Highness making common cause, probably for the first time in his life, with some of the Editors of the Native Press and pressing on them and the President a suggestion which was greeted with a warm welcome. The voluntary conversion of the Maharaja of Vizianagaram into an active sympathiser of the Congress and the goodwill of other princes and zamindars are a distinct gain to the party of reform. Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao's early association with the Committee, his willingness to take the onerous responsibilities of President of the Reception Committee and the personal enquiries he was making from time to time of the working of the Committee should also be mentioned. The hearty co-operation with the aims and objects of the Congress of the people at large of this Presidency is as significant as that of the wealthier classes. That a large portion of Rs 2000 that the Committee was able to collect was subscribed by the ryots and artisan classes in annas and pies, that the small trading colony of Madras in Singapore made of their own accord a donation of Rs 200 are some of the most pleasant facts that go to prove the awakening of the masses to the call of their leaders. The numerous letters and suggestions that the people of this presidency have sent in Tamil, Telugu and Hindustani to the Madras Committee testify to their acquaintance with the object of the Congress. The bar, in spite of the absence of some of our illustrious countrymen, was brilliantly and fully represented."

The Hindu reviewing the results of the Madras session appealed to the leaders not to rest on their oars and stressed the necessity to spread the message of the Congress among the Muslim masses. "The Congress has met and has dissolved", it wrote "The echoes of its deliberations, the speeches, the debates and resolutions are fading into mere recollections. . . The native papers have written of the success of the Congress in terms of the highest satisfaction and the faint murmurs of the dissenting Anglo-Indian organs will soon cease to be heard. What then? Is this all the consummation that was striven for? The third Congress has been very successful in every way, but are our friends, the chief spirits of that movement to rest on their laurels and go to a sleep till the time comes for the next Congress to meet in Allahabad? Nothing can be a more unfortunate procedure. If our leaders know their business and the secret of success in these national undertakings they must push on vigorously and improve the advantage already secured. One great effect of the recent exertions was the friendly attitude of a large number of our fellow Mahomedan subjects. What they saw of the Congress, the magnificence of the occasion, the importance of its objects, the ability of the chief men and above all the high praise that Europeans have bestowed on the whole thing made excellent impressions on the minds of the Mahomedan delegates. . . This is therefore the time when we should try to strengthen and widen these impressions and bring home to the minds of our fellow subjects the profound gravity of the issues involved in the present movement. As Mr. Tyabji observed the Mahomedan opposition to the Congress rests on "local, special and temporary causes" and wherever sympathy is absent in that community it is generally owing to ignorance and want of sufficient inducement. The leading men of the Congress should not forget this fact. It is absurd to imagine that the influence

of the Aligarh clique is ubiquitous. Nor is the whole body of Mahomedan community bound by identical traditions and prospective advantages. Of the 50 million Mahomedans inhabiting India a very large proportion are Mahomedans only by religion and there is no reason why these should not share in the aspirations of the Hindus and harmoniously co-operate with them in the same way as native Christians and Eurasians do. It is wrong therefore to arrive at any opinion with regard to the possible opinion of the whole community from the manifest disposition of a small section of it. We must meet the masses of that community with all the resources of our organisation in the same way that the masses of the Hindu community have been met and partially enlightened and converted to the views of the educated classes. If our leaders now seek rest after the arduous labours of the past few weeks they may have to reconstruct much that is already an achieved fact, they will lose the immense advantage of the favourable disposition which the presidentship of Mr. Tyabji, the presence of so large a number of Mahomedans as delegates and other circumstance of the Congress have created among the Mahomedans of light and leading in various centres. It should not be supposed that in thus entreating our friends to push on without giving themselves rest we attach undue importance to the disposition of Mahomedans as an element of progressive forces. They are no doubt a very important community and their present numbers, their past position in this country and the relation of our rulers to populations of the same faith in other quarters of the globe, import to that community considerable importance. . . . They will see as well as the Hindus of the real significance of the call for co-operation if they are properly approached. Irresponsible critics, actuated by sordid motives, may attribute to the Hindus cunning designs; they may say that we want to wheedle them into helping us to substantial political power. But as a matter of fact, it is the class of men represented by these degenerate specimens of the English nation that take both the Hindus and Mahomedans for fools and sowing discord between them seek to perpetuate their ascendancy and the subjection of the natives. The Hindus attach great importance to the co-operation of the Mahomedans because they want the whole country should benefit by the proposed reforms and that these proposals should have the support of the unanimous voice of the whole nation. We have little doubt that this support will be freely accorded to us if the real objects of the Congress are properly explained to our hesitating countrymen. Considering what power the co-operation of the Mahomedans will impart to the Congress, the Hindus may even go to the length of offering a promise to respect the scruples that the whole Mahomedan community as represented by their delegates may entertain. There may be an understanding that should the Hindu or Mahomedan delegates attending the Congress unanimously, or nearly unanimously, object to a certain subject or to a certain proposition being discussed the Congress should drop that subject or proposition. In fact, in the recent Congress the Hindu delegates showed this kind of deference to the feeling of their Mahomedan friends (when an attempt was made to bring before the Congress the subject of cow killing and to consider a resolution requesting the Government to prohibit it) "The attempt was forthwith put down and not even a whisper was allowed to go abroad about such a foolish proposition. We are glad to believe that there will be no objections on the part of the other communities thus to

meet our Mahomedan friends half way and conciliate their scruples whether reasonable or otherwise"

The Hindu thought it "disgraceful" that there should be frequent clashes between Hindus and Muslims on flimsy issues like taking out processions and playing music before mosques when the need was to present a united front and help the British to meet the Russian threat on the border. Writing in 1885 when the Russian danger was looming large The Hindu said "We really do not know when the quarrels about processions between the the Hindus and the Mahomedans of this country will cease. It is disgraceful that just at this juncture when the Russians are threatening our country, our countrymen should enter into foolish squabbles for trifling matters instead of joining hands with our British brethren to extinguish our common foe. We are led to make these remarks from the fact that at Belgaum there occurred at the last day of the Holi festival an unseemly quarrel in which certain Hindus and Mahomedans were arrested. We think that the leaders of both the communities ought now to make an effort to extinguish the fanaticism which year after year breaks out and only tends to widen the breach between these two sections of Her Majesty's subjects. Unity among all classes must be our primary aim towards the realising of which it is our bounden duty to direct our efforts"

About the Russian danger The Hindu wrote, "There was at no time any doubt as to the aggressiveness of the policy of Russia in that part of the world (Central Asia); but the effort of that ambitious country to take England by surprise amid delusive diplomatic assurance of friendship and the desire of England to avert a war if possible, have put off the date of the affair assuming a definitely critical complexion. The movement of Russia has been cautious and deliberate and in pursuit of a cunning but well worked design. The bear takes a leap which creates alarm and elicits protest from England. Immediately assurances of regret and firm friendship flow profusely from St Petersburg. England is satisfied and sinks again into an unsuspecting apathy about the designs of Russia and her intrigues in Central Asia until another leap rouses England again. In this manner Russia has been moving slowly and stealthily until at length the British lion has been, as Mr. Vambery says, driven to the wall and is now threatened with an early struggle"

The Hindu said: "We hope a war may be averted but if Russia cannot be made to abandon her present course by any other means, England must not hesitate a moment to resort to it with vigour and convince her unprincipled rival of her determination to keep Afghanistan from the Russian grasp. Russia should not be allowed to play her dangerous game any longer. At any cost England must maintain her prestige and protect her Indian possessions from all possible as well as actual encroachment by a foreign power".

Writing on Russia again a few days later The Hindu urged that "No concessions of any kind should be made in Russia's favour. The Russians are not a treaty-respecting nation and international morality is at a great discount with them". The Hindu suggested that the British should utilise the native states' armies. "The armies of native states must be utilised in some manner by our rulers on this occasion and as Russia expects to threaten us by mustering a force overwhelming in numbers we must have recourse to similar tactics. All native states in India will of course sink their differences and unite to help the country"

While *The Hindu* advised Britain to go to war with Russia if it could not be averted, it made its repugnance to wars as such clear in an editorial on the Sudan war which led to the fall of Khartoum and the death of General Gordon. "It is rather a funny thing," it said, "that war should be considered glorious. Private warfare is universally condemned and yet there appears to be more reason and good sense for private than for public warfare. Warfare of any kind is objectionable but if warfare must obtain and human passions must find a relief in putting an end to their own lives or the lives of their followers it would certainly appear that nations have no more right to sacrifice life than individuals have. 'National interest' is a war cry but thousands of men in battle after robbing the pacific people of their money add to the national debt. What results? Certainly no personal advantage to either combatant. We talk of nations and national feeling in a very odd and mysterious way. Nations are made up of individuals and it is only the pride of individuals that induces them to regard other inhabitants of the earth as enemies. What good to any nation has this Sudan war done? Is anyone happy or better for it or have individuals gained anything by it? Individual hearts rejoice over a success on their side but the rejoicing on one side by a nation is met by weeping on both sides. Widows, orphans, misery and distress are multiplied by each successive battle — millions of money are spent at the nod of one man and these millions are spent in the operation of killing not preserving life. If the millions freely given for warfare were spent for peace it would be much better. But it seems impossible. The penny that would save a starving man is wrung from him in order to kill some one else and so two are killed and seemingly for nothing."

In a review of events in 1886 *The Hindu* referred to the forging of national unity in the wake of the Russian danger. "The Princes and the people of India perceived in the threatened Russian invasion the possibility of the British Government being replaced by a Government much more despotic and much less civilised. Much as they might disapprove of certain policies and principles of the British Government they value it infinitely better than that of the 'autocrat of all Russians.' They spontaneously perceived how imperative it was in the interest of their national existence and honour that they should stand side by side with Englishmen in defending their country against the menace of a foreign invasion. The native chiefs offered to place their armies at the disposal of the Government to repel the invasion. Wealthy men offered to place their wealth and influence in the hands of the Government for the same purpose, the native press made protestations of their loyalty to the country to the British rule and the Government was enabled to enlist themselves as volunteers desiring to serve shoulder to shoulder with their English fellow subjects in the defence of their country. Altogether the crisis offered a fresh manifestation of the consciousness of the people regarding their interests as a nation subject to the same Government, bound together by a common history, a common religion and a common destiny in the path of the same destiny. It was a feeling of national unity which the people as the French invasion produced on the feeling of national unity in Germany."

In February, 1887 the Golden Jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria was celebrated on a grand scale all over India. *The Hindu* reported thus on the celebrations in Madras Presidency: "The celebrations of Her Majesty's jubilee went off satisfactorily. The people and the Government both parts well

Not merely Madras but almost every town in the Presidency made efforts to make the occasion a memorable one and we have no doubt that it will be remembered for many years to come not indeed so much by the *tamasha* and other demonstrations of which the effect will be transient, as by the new institutions and improvements of more or less permanent usefulness which it is hoped that these efforts will bring into existence. It must be acknowledged that so far as Madras is concerned — and it is true with regard to the whole country we believe — the celebrations judged by the mere demonstration would look disappointing. In Madras the native portion of the town showed no sign of their appreciation of the occasion. It was evident that the jubilee was not looked upon as anything like a national festival. If the occasion were Deepavali or Moharrum every house would be illuminated and every man and woman would adorn themselves with new clothes and jewels. But no such thing was done by the people on Wednesday. Some educated natives did indeed join in the celebration but the real *tamasha* of the day was contributed by the committee and by shopkeepers. If therefore the loyalty of the people was tested by the interest that the jubilee created in their minds they cannot be said to have stood the test. But from this it will be absurd to conclude that they are wanting in loyalty. The fact of the matter is the masses of India have no idea of the good nature and benevolence of the Queen who is to them an unknown and mysterious person living in a foreign land thousands of miles away. Their loyalty is loyalty to the Government of the Queen but not to her person. The English rule is not personal rule like that of the native rulers. Wherever indeed the representatives of the Queen prove benevolent and condescending they win their personal attachment which however is not the same feeling as the inherent and traditional loyalty of Englishmen towards their sovereign. While therefore they are ready to make any sacrifice for the honour and protection of the Government, their mind is blank with regard to the Great Lady whose beneficence has showered its blessings on the people of her world-wide empire. Whatever excitement the jubilee did actually create was entirely owing to the appreciation of the occasion by the educated natives as a class which it is the fashion in certain quarters to denounce as discontented and seditious. They alone have had opportunities to learn of the greatness and goodness of their Empress”.

There were reports of forced collections from the people in connection with the jubilee celebrations and The Hindu criticised officials responsible for it. It wrote “We very much regret to hear accounts of official pressure in collecting funds for the celebration of the jubilee. As we observed on Friday there has been little spontaneous enthusiasm among the masses in this matter and it will be highly improper for officials to try and coerce the people to pay money when they do not spontaneously come forward to do so. We have heard of a District judge writing to Munsiffs to pay at least one day’s salary and from a different district we learn that not only merchants and ryots but also the coolies in the P. W. D. and in the railways department have been coerced to contribute. We trust that this kind of pressure will be put an end to at once. It is on account of this habit of forced collections that it has become almost impossible to induce people to attend meetings convened by officials. And it is better that the business of collecting funds is entirely left to influential non-officials”.

Two years later in December 1889, the Prince of Wales (Prince Albert Victor) visited places of interest in Madras Presidency such as Tiruchi and Madurai and The Hindu carried good news reports of His Royal Highness' tour. The readers of the paper were given an idea of khedda operations in Mysore when the Mysore Correspondent reported one staged for the Prince of Wales who visited the state.

The Correspondent wrote. "H R H Prince Albert Victor and H H the Maharaja left for Chamrajanagar with their suite on Monday. Horses were posted every five miles and the drive to Chamrajanagar, a distance of about 40 miles, was done in four hours. After breakfast the party drove to Sandalkote and there abandoning the carriage took to their horses, proceeding in a bridle path made for the time being, through impenetrable jungle of thorn bushes. A large number of tents had been pitched to accommodate the visitors and no efforts seemed to have been spared to make the stay of the Royal visitor as agreeable as possible. At 2 p.m. the whole party started to witness the drive of elephants in country carts, on village ponies, and other conveyances. A well wooded valley was the scene of the catch and the khedda was surrounded with a ditch and a bund and a framework of bamboo branches. At 3.15 p.m. the drive began and the elephants which had been previously driven into the enclosure with a loud yell marched off to the distant point through the opening of the fence in the second enclosure; the opening was then shut by the dropping of a large gate as soon as the last elephant passed. The herd consisted of 23 animals of which six were tusked, and collecting themselves in one place with all their heads turned one way, stood closely together taking matters quietly. At the request of the Prince the elephants were re-driven through the gates by the beaters, setting up a loud yell. The Prince and his party being very near, Mr. Brown, the photographer, had a narrow escape from a female elephant which charged him while he was adjusting his camera in order to take a photo of the imprisoned herd. The huge animal was driven back by the shouting and clapping of hands by the beaters. At 3.45 p.m. the gate was again lifted and the beaters started the herd towards the tying enclosure where the tamed elephants were kept ready. As soon as six had crossed into the second enclosure the gate was dropped and they were shut off from their associates. The decoy elephants, which were recently purchased at Dacca, surrounded the wild elephants and pressed them so closely that movement was rendered difficult. Skilful mahouts then passed ropes round the hind legs of the wild ones and secured them. When the Prince arrived at 4.40 even more elephants were driven and secured in the same manner. A female elephant in her rage in failing to grip Mr. Sanderson ploughed up earth and kicked her legs and sent a shower of stones and earth into his face. The Prince remained encamped on a peak where a tent had been pitched for him."

"A Native Observer", one of the two earliest columnists of The Hindu (about whom and his identity we shall deal in the next chapter) had something to say to H.R.H. "Survey this vast empire", he told him, "And its immense population. Some of your countrymen may say with natural pride that this empire has been conquered by the sword and must be ruled by the sword. The conquest is not the best part of England's glory. A few thousands slain on the battlefield, overawed and subdued many millions. Far more glorious is England's peaceful and beneficent rule over this ancient land. This has two



bases First wisdom, justice and benevolence; secondly, the mild, peaceful and law abiding character of the Indian population By all means constantly preserve these two great bases Preserve the first by sending out the wisest, the justest, and the most benevolent rulers you can find in your country Preserve the second by sending out the wisest, justest and the most benevolent teachers you can find in your country With such rulers and teachers the Empire will last long. With bad rulers and teachers the Empire might be ruined in a century The rulers and the teachers must be the most perfect specimens of cultured humanity. Mere academic qualifications are not enough”

# Two Distinguished Columnists

**T**HE HINDU came out as a daily from April 1, 1889. The readers were given notice of the memorable event in an announcement by the Proprietors above the leading article a week before and with an editorial (which has been recorded in an earlier page) on the first issue of the daily. It had taken the paper 11 years to achieve this status and there was outwardly not many changes in its format and layout and in its contents. The size of The Hindu continued to be eight pages and it was published six days in the week, Sunday being a holiday. Page one continued to be an advertisement page while page two carried extracts from newspapers and periodicals under the heading, Contemporary opinion. Tit bits from local and Indian centres were grouped under a column headed: Current news. Page three featured letters to the Editor under the title "Correspondence", and also mofussil news while page four was the editorial page, the leading articles beginning from the first column. On this page were also published extracts from foreign Press and Correspondents. Page five carried brief foreign telegrams lifted from the morning papers under the general heading, Telegrams. There were also news paragraphs relating to Madras and other centres. Page six was devoted to Indian news which was mostly extracted from the Indian and British owned papers of North India. Pages seven and eight were advertisement pages.

Within a month of its conversion as a daily The Hindu introduced its first columnist to its readers, Sentinel, who wrote a weekly column with the title "Olla Podrida". A few months later another columnist, "A native Observer" was presented and he also wrote once a week although his piece was much shorter than that of Sentinel. The identities of these two columnists were not revealed but that of "A Native Observer" soon became public property since he landed himself in a raging controversy over his reactionary views on political and social reforms. The Hindu itself took cudgels against him and he had to bow his way out of its columns. This columnist was revealed as the distinguished administrator and Dewan of many native states, Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao, who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee when the third session of the National Congress was held in Madras in 1887.

"A Native Observer", who gave indications of being an orthodox, conservative Hindu, specialised in home truths and generally acted as a brake on the zeal of educated Indians to imitate Western customs and culture. On

December 6, 1889 this is what he wrote in his column on the Hindu marriage system 'What are the special advantages the Hindu marriage system claims over other systems? The following may be roughly stated (1) A more stable relation between husband and wife (2) A more peaceful one (3) A more mutually useful one, one with less latitude for infidelity (4) One with greater co-operation for the welfare of the family (5) One with greater mutual dependence (6) The ensuring of greater affection and tenderness for the children (7) One ensuring greater sobriety and good conduct. Add to the foregoing the following great advantages. It ensures a more equitable distribution of the sexes. Almost every man has got a wife. Almost every woman has got a husband. Society is saved the distraction, the jealousies, enmities, intrigues and other manifold evils of general competition for wives. It has also saved a great number of bad and infelicitous marriages resulting from blind passion. The system also minimises the necessity for divorce and compulsory separation'.

A Correspondent in a letter to *The Hindu* referring to 'A Native Observer's' remarks asked: (1) If every man gets a wife and every woman a husband both of them must beget as a natural consequence a number of children. Every child born has a right to be maintained pretty comfortably either by the parents or by the community. Will "A Native Observer" or men in his position kindly tell us how many and to what extent must each man be prepared to maintain the too many unwelcome offspring of poor parents? (2) Is the life of a man or woman whose tastes are few whose pleasures are low and limited, whose mind is resigned, whose heart is content with ignorance, really to be envied? Is ignorance really a bliss? (3) Are parents of 13 and 15 years of age, inexperienced and illiterate, likely to bring up their children better than the more aged and educated men and women? (4) Is not the domestic peace of Hindu homes due to the benevolent despotism of husbands and the ignorance and social disqualifications of women? Does "A Native Observer" really prefer a despotic Government however benevolent it may be, to a liberal and constitutional one? Where are the chances of infelicitous marriages greater? Is it in a system where every man of judgment and every woman of sense is allowed to choose under the advice and guidance of parents or in a system where caste divisions, ill-sorted horoscopes, bad omens, pecuniary motives of parents, avarice and ambition of parents who have passed the heyday of their lives, limit the field and liberty of choice? (5) "A Native Observer" congratulates the Hindu system of marriage on the fewer divorce cases and compulsory separation. This is exactly on the lines of those statesmen who congratulated the Government of India because its dumb millions never complain against the high-handedness of the ruling members. How are complaints and divorces possible where the Hindu law confers enormous and august privileges upon men, where men can set aside their wives upon the flimsiest of excuses, where men are allowed by public opinion to wander free and the women are persecuted most ruthlessly for the slightest indiscretion, where the law of property and inheritance is deadly against the independence and interests of women?"

This writer has not been able to discover if "A Native Observer" replied to this challenge to his thesis but very soon the columnist was involved in a much bigger controversy which resulted in columns of words being printed in *The Hindu* over many weeks. It all began when a correspondent who was given the honour of contributing to the editorial column (a regular feature in *The Hindu*

for a very long time) criticised the "conservative views" of "A Native Observer" and his defence of the caste system and advised him to retire to a forest "for silent meditation". "A Native Observer" in reply, wrote "Not oblivious of the fact that my good cousin had often told his countrymen that forgiveness and forbearance are important traits in the Aryan character, I read a prominent leader in yesterday's Hindu with the sobriety and serenity which temperament or education has taught me to cultivate with some assiduity. Amidst the verbal wealth which lay spread before me I was much pleased to observe traces still existing of that innate and ineradicable courtesy which was the envied product of an ancient civilisation. For some understandable provocation incident to what was perhaps too frank an assertion of certain truths the writer does no worse than advise me to retire into a forest for the luxury of silent meditation. As a slight return for this courtesy and consideration let me hope that when in due time the writer of the article himself seeks such employment, his meditation may be altogether free from regret and repentance".

The identity of "A Native Observer" was slightly revealed when an angry reader came to his rescue in a letter to the Editor. "As a Hindu", he wrote, "it grieves me to see that you, dear sir, as the Editor of a daily paper at the metropolis of Southern India (I don't say the benighted Presidency) should use your space to abuse the prominent native statesman and benefactor of his country. You say that 'there is something in the manner of his writing that offends the educated reader'. This is too vague and general to be met except by a general denial. I have heard some of the so called educated men ridiculing the writings of "A Native Observer". But the object and motive in doing so were too obvious to need any exposure. I know that other occasions also were unscrupulously seized to abuse the great Indian statesman who writes under the pseudonym "A Native Observer". Again "A Native Observer's" tightness over the strings of his money purse was a theme of one of the Congresswallahs. In short I may tell you that I conversed with several educated men, including graduates in arts or law or both and I did not find there was any feeling of offence in the manner of the writings of "A Native Observer". On the contrary, several of them expressed themselves to this effect: "It is an ill-bird that fouls its own nest". The writer went on in this strain and the Editor in a note at the end of the letter said: "We publish this letter after some hesitation because it not only misrepresents us, but does actual disservice to the gentleman whom it tries to defend".

The Hindu revealed the identity of "A Native Observer" when in an editorial titled: "Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao's inconsistency", it wrote. "Within the short period of three years, Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao has changed his opinions on political and social questions and the change has been decidedly for the worse. Under the pseudonym of "A Native Observer" he is now flooding the local papers with notes and paragraphs containing his observations and these observations give no indistinct indications of his views on the burning topics of the day. In politics he is now decidedly against the principle of election and in social reform he advocates such extreme caution as almost amounts to indifference. He ridicules his educated countrymen and condemns their ambition. He thinks they are proceeding too fast with the work of destruction. Although he calls himself a congresswallah he has a different notion of its ideal from what it has tried to realise during these five years. He appears to be excited at

the very name. It acts on him as a red rag on a bull. The mission of the present generation is in a sense to work backward and in this way certain old foundations might be strengthened but as Sir Henry Maine said and as Sir T. Madhava Rao himself has more than once said, we believe our aims and instruments must be of the patterns of modern civilisation but not of a civilisation which however venerable for its antiquity is for practical purposes more or less antiquated and useless."

The Hindu later published an extract from an Indian newspaper which described Sir T. Madhava Rao as a "Congressman who became a moderate Congressman and then a Congressman no more".

The Columnist, Sentinel (who will figure in our Chronicle later on) had also something to say about Sir T. Madhava Rao. He wrote: "No one has more respect for Sir Madhava Rao than I myself. In spite of an occasional lapse his career on the whole is creditable to himself and the surroundings. Our excellent friend has permitted himself a licence of action and of speech which would be unpardonable but for that advancing age which here as in so many other lamentable instances, attests the growth of decay. Only in Sir Madhava Rao's case the decay is also abnormally rapid. It is not necessary that diseased statesman should retire to the woods. Let him reserve his "observations" for the benefit of himself, his children and Lord Connemara. These can laugh in secret over the ruins of the past. Why should he invite angels to weep over the contrast of what was with what he is? The cheeriest sage of ancient as of modern times — prophetic in this foreshadowing of Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao K C S I — once penned a couplet the philosophy of which the Raja's friends would do well to recognise and act upon the Raja's interests. Translated it runs "give rest in time to that old horse for fear at last he founder amid the general jeer". A collection of his recent utterances shows that whatever he may once have been he is no longer a factor of any power (save in the hands of a Times Correspondent or of a Government both of whom laugh at him in private) politically, economically, numerically, physically, geometrically or even algebraically".

There is a footnote to the story of "A Native Observer". On the death of Lady Madhava Rao, wife of Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao in February 1895, The Hindu said the "sad event furnishes an occasion to her three sons to do some charity to commemorate the names of their distinguished parents. We think that the late Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao left about 10 lakhs of rupees and considering that two of the three sons hold respectable appointments in the public service, is it too much to hope that a lakh of rupees will be set apart in honour of the lady that has quitted this world? These remarks apply to the case of the late Sir T. Muthuswami Aiyer also in whose case his son, Mr. Swaminatha Aiyer, holding a place in the civil service, there is greater obligation for something being done to recognise the claims of the public on the savings of those that grow rich at their expense".

Sentinel, the other columnist, who as we have already mentioned had captioned his column "Olla Podrida", was the distinguished criminal lawyer Eardley Norton who belongs to the galaxy of Englishmen who helped to found and nurture the great national organisation, the Congress. His *nom de plume* was not revealed for many years and it was K. Subba Rao (who was on the staff of The Hindu almost from its early years) who in a series of articles in The Hindu

on his reminiscences disclosed Eardley Norton's close association with the paper and his work as a columnist

Eardley Norton entered the columns of *The Hindu* with a bang as it were, raising a storm of protest over some remarks he made about Indians at a meeting where he was the principal speaker. This happened four years before he became a columnist of *The Hindu*. He was then almost new to Madras and young but he had already established a reputation at the bar. He had been invited to speak by the Triplicane Literary Society at the Presidency College and the very next day a reader wrote to *The Hindu*: "I very much regret that Mr. Norton at the Presidency College Hall spoke without knowing what he spoke. However sincere and well meaning he may be certainly he was wanting in discretion. What does he know of the Hindus to jump at the conclusion that all Hindus are wanting in truthfulness? Even granting that the Hindus are untruthful what right has he to say that before a public body?"

The Correspondent quoted Norton as saying: "After I make every due allowance I am in all honesty bound to tell you that I conceive one of the gravest failings in the native character to be a want of truth. I fear this is as true today as when 20 years ago my father told you the same thing as honestly as I do to-night."

Another reader wrote: "When the lecturer charged the whole Indian nation as an insincere set of men, my blood began to boil and my face to redden. However revered and honoured his father was by the whole native community, the lecturer had no business to call the whole nation as a nation of liars and one utterly wanting in self-respect. How much of India, I ask, did the lecturer see to fling this charge against the whole Indian nation? A youngster as he is what experience has he of India and its people to come forward before an audience composed of the flower of native gentry and say that 'you are wanting in truthfulness and self-respect?'. Again how can his hasty generalisations stand if those are made only from the black side of humanity? I think the chairman would have done his duty if he had closed the meeting with a word of warning, nay, of reprimand to the young lecturer by remarking that all that the lecturer had said was thoroughly not suited to the occasion and that it was the buoyancy of his youth that led him to make these remarks against a whole nation however sincere his motives were." The Correspondent signed himself: "A member of the Triplicane Literary Society". The heading to the first letter was: Mr Norton's maiden speech."

A third reader who said the lecture had been organised by the Triplicane Literary Society to promote cultural contacts between the natives and Englishmen, pointed out that in the background of the current agitation against the Ilbert Bill by Englishmen and the assertion of moral superiority by the agitators (the Ilbert Bill extended the jurisdiction of trial of Europeans to Indian magistrates and judges and this was vigorously opposed by the European community), Mr. Norton's remarks were "very sweeping". He asked what acquaintance Mr Norton had with native character apart from his experience with the lower class of population. "I am glad to acknowledge", the Correspondent said, "that the remarks proceeded from no illwill to the natives; neither need we be squeamish about anything uttered plainly about the dark side of our character by one who does it (like Mr. Norton) from the best of motives, from a sincere desire to reform the character of those to whom the

remarks were addressed but bearing in mind that the question of addressing one on one's own character is a very ticklish thing especially if it is the dark side and that Mr Norton is a very young man whose acquaintance of native character outside the precincts of the law courts is practically nil, the natives had every right to expect that the lecturer, especially to a mixed audience like that which Mr Norton addressed, should have approached the question with due respect and circumspection which it eminently deserved. The Correspondent added "It is peculiarly unfortunate that an attack on native character should at this moment emanate from one to whom it will be hypocritical to deny the merit of sincerity and sympathy with the natives".

The debate was continued the next day when a reader who signed himself "A" asked why the flower of native gentry which was present at the lecture kept quiet. "If the flower of native gentry", he wrote, "had no self-respect then how can you expect the masses to possess it? Had that audience self-respect, anyone would have stood up on his legs, taught the chairman his duty and stopped the lecturer from proceeding further with his vagaries and thus make every one present quit the hall so that the speaker may gaze at the walls and pillars of the Hall".

Another reader said "Let Mr Norton minutely examine the state of things in England. He will find the usual proportion of good and bad there too. Instances without number may be adduced there too of roguery and honesty, habits of impurity and cleanliness, kindness of heart and cruelty, morality and licentiousness, low cunning and childish stupidity, extraordinary intelligence and bullock-like stupidity, falsehood and truth, cowardice and bravery, information and ignorance — in short, almost every quality that can be imagined. When such is the case in England how idle it is to make sweeping statements with regard to the people of India without any observation and careful examination".

There the matter ended without the accused replying to the attacks on him and The Hindu also was silent on the whole incident but it itself was involved in litigation with Norton not much later.

When Norton was Coroner of Madras he felt aggrieved with some remarks about him in The Hindu and filed a complaint in the Presidency Magistrate's Court, which was almost the first case of defamation against the paper. Norton was forced to prosecute the paper at the instance of Mr. Huddleston, then senior member of the Governor's council. An apology was published in the paper. It may be said here that Subramania Aiyer did not write the offending article. The Editor was fined Rs. 200 but subsequently Norton and G. Subramania Aiyer became very good friends and perhaps this led to Norton writing a column in The Hindu. A reader gave this description of Norton on the eve of his departure from India in 1926: "Are you a lover of truth and justice? He is on your side. Are you a hater of shams and arrogance? He is hand in glove with you. About six feet high, thin of body and limb, he possesses a face remarkable in itself. To see it is to love it. See him once and there is no forgetting him. The stamp of his face is perpetually impressed on your memory. His eyes flash like lightning; they pierce you on all sides. His nose is singular in the extreme — singular in its curvature. His broad and expansive forehead is an index to his intellect. Watch him for a moment and you see his restlessness. You will not find him in the same attitude, in the same posture for

two minutes together. The exuberance of his energy makes him physically active as he is mentally."

K. Subba Rao who had to subedit Norton's copy said: "His handwriting was very good to look at but it was exceedingly difficult to decipher. At times we had to spend two to three hours a day in making out some of the words and phrases. Not infrequently did we search in vain for some reliable clue in the dictionary for the correct spelling of the latin words and phrases which he used in great profusion." Norton never spared the titled men and the aristocracy (as we shall see in the extracts from his column below). Indians in prominent positions who were in the good graces of Government incurred Norton's displeasure and he was unwearying in exposing their real or imaginary faults".

Sentinel (we shall use Norton's pseudonym in speaking of his column) began his very first appearance in *The Hindu* (on May 28, 1889) with a comparison between the Bengalis and the Madrasis to the disadvantage of the latter. "Socially", he said, "Calcutta is far in advance of Madras. Here the non-official element is very small. The large mercantile houses are subsidised by Government. One enjoys the salt monopoly, a second the abkari and so on. The result here is an absolute want of anything like independence. In Calcutta the commercial element is strong because it is numerically too large to be bribed. The result is that in Calcutta there is a public opinion which is remarkable by its absence in Madras. There it controls, here it is controlled by official excess. Another very marked difference is the far greater weight which the Indian element exercises upon public affairs in Calcutta than in Madras. And I believe the explanation is to be found in the fact that there is more rough moral grit in the Bengalee than in the Madrassie. Englishmen may not like opposition but they respect it. What is the secret of the influence which such men as W. C. Bonnerjee and Mr. Mon Mohan Ghosh exercise? Not mere wealth. They are but mere practising barristers. Their power is attributable to the knowledge that they are outside the radius of official pressure. Either might have been a High Court judge. Both have steadfastly preferred complete freedom of action. Mr. Bonnerjee has acted as standing counsel to the Government of India. He knew quite well that his reversion to that appointment—a legitimate object of ambition to any successful advocate—would be imperilled by his adhesion to the Congress. Yet he never wavered in his choice. It is said his chance of the office is lost. But he stands higher than ever in the estimation of all men who are capable of appreciating the subordination of self-interest to duty. It is fashionable in certain quarters to laugh at the Babu. In many respects he illustrates a principle that I should be glad to see in more general vogue down south. It is easy to sneer at his patent leathers and his English. But his press is more powerful than our own and he has the courage of his convictions."

"How is it with us? Intellectually we are not behind Bengal. Morally we are. As a lawyer Mr. Subramania Aiyer (later Sir S. Subramania Aiyer), our acting Government pleader, may cheerfully invite comparison with his brethren in the north. But everyone whose keenness of sight can penetrate the future or whose familiarity with English modes of thought is comparatively sound will regret the reasoning which has induced Mr. Subramania Aiyer since his appointment to suspend his connection with the Congress. The natives of Madras are too malleable in the hands of Government. Office purchased at



such a cost means a cause sacrificed Which is the brighter picture, constancy in Bengal upheld at the loss of a standing counselship or the Government pleadership in Madras bartered in exchange for political silence?"

Here is another humorous piece on the foibles of upper class Indians This describes a scene at the Central Railway Station in Madras at the time of the arrival of a Governor.

"The platform of the Central Station is an amusing and instructive theatre, when the Governor 'invites' society to witness his arrival at or departure from Madras. Everyone who wants an appointment is there in the hope the Governor will note and remember his appearance. Everyone who wants promotion is present animated by similar care of self. A large number are present on the principle that the next best thing to being the rose is to be seen near it. Those who possess the privilege of shaking hands with the Governor attend in order they may excite the admiration and the envy of those who do not possess that privilege. A few subalterns like the chance of airing their new uniform. A few wives seize the opportunity of doing their husbands a good turn and airing their latest dress-improvers. The church is there to gather glory from an earthly King; the police to keep order; the civilians because they are the salt of the earth. The C.I.E.s because they want C.S.s and the C.S.s because they want another letter of the alphabet. And when it is all over, everyone comes back to the club and swears the whole thing is a d—d nuisance. But this is loyalty and consolidates the everlasting supremacy of the British Empire. Amen".

Sentinel had a dig at the Government when he found Government offering posts of responsibility and status to Congressmen.

"The elevation — that is a grand word and calls up a magnificent vista of greatness — of Mr Sankaran Nair to the Legislative Council means one of two things for certain. Either the Government do not object to the views of the Congressionists which is improbable or they find it difficult to make a selection outside the adherents of the Congress which is very probable. The truth is no Indian in this presidency of any intellectual worth but is a Congressionist. If you want indigenous ability you cannot find it outside the ranks of the Congress Party. If the Government hate us as they most assuredly do, why do they promote Congressmen? The answer is simple. Because outside the disciples of the Congress the Government can only find sufficient ability to mend pens and perform the duties of office sweepers. I watch Mr Sankaran Nair's career with interest. Will he be true to himself and his cause or will the seductive attractions of sitting among the high if not very ancient nobility of the town prove that he too is not proof against the wiles of authority? Will Mr Sankaran Nair attend the next session of the Congress? Or will he abstain, of course, 'in the best interests of my fellow countrymen'? I have not yet got over Mr. Subramania Aiyer's defection. 'If he could only hear himself held up in European circles as a clear instance of the peculiar amenability of the Indian to the flattery of Government — God save the mark — I could point out among numberless instances one very remarkable conversion of an Englishman whom "office" has toned down from the bitterest opponent at points to the most servile admirer of his new masters. Mr. Subramania Aiyer would recognise that he has inflicted a nasty blow upon the people whose interests he advocates. I say I have not yet got over that shock. I will not make rash forecasts about Mr. Sankaran Nair. I will wait. *Nous Verrons*".

And now about the members of his own profession, not very complimentary either to the bench or bar unless of course Sentinel did not mean what he said "Every trade has its trick (he wrote in July, 1889) Professions are not without their little artifices Business at the bar may be secured in many ways The two easiest are either to live with an attorney or to chum with a judge The first enables you to secure briefs The second to win them To judges and attorneys accordingly there is a new legitimate and considerable source of income opened up Let them auction their respective capabilities to house hungry members of the bar The bids will both be numerous and high"

. And this one about Justice Muthuswami Aiyer "Mr Justice Muthuswami Aiyer is turning out a wag Here is his latest question to counsel while arguing a point of criminal law on revision "Can you quote any authority in the last century or this in England or the continent for the purpose of showing that when a magistrate attaches the property of an absconding offender he is bound, on discharge of that offender, to restore the property to him at the same place whence he took it?" The learned judge is nothing if he is not comprehensive. But counsel's face was a study as he was asked to expound an answer to the judicial conundrum"

The Maharaja of Vizianagaram was the victim of Sentinel's ridicule and banter in a piece written on December 2, 1889 "It was getting too hot for the Maharajah of Vizianagaram — morally not physically — and that well meaning but weak headed puppet of authority bolted to Calcutta finding in flight the last security against inroads on his purse The trustees of the Victoria Hall or rather 11 out of 12, the 12th having only lately recovered from a nasty illness much to the disappointment of his friends — frightened the golden goose She had already presented an egg of the value of Rs 5000 to Sir Charles Lawson as her contribution to the Reception Committee of Prince Albert Victor's next welcome. Then 22 hands, clothed in the velvet covering of an "address", tried a flank movement upon an egg inscribed "one lakh" But this was the young mother's pet; so with a cry that sounded strangely like "Supreme Council, Calcutta", she circled into the air with the egg in her beak and found unmolested repose in the first class cabin of a British India boat. In plain words the trustees presented the Maharajah with an address in which they thanked H. H. for his munificence in having lent them a lakh, extolled the family propensity to be open handed, called his father noble and with a chuckle implored the Maharajah to take note of their sudden and unostentatious gratitude. But the trick failed and the Maharajah declining to change his loan into a gift, chucked in by way of compensation an attack upon the National Congress and an allusion to the Roman Law No one understood the latter and all the officials were charmed with the former It is understood that Lord Connemara will recommend H. H. for an additional gun. If the Commissioners could give it to the silly boy they might ask for 3 lakhs and be sure of getting them".

The most hilarious and probably his last (there is no evidence of contribution by Sentinel after this piece) sally at Indian aristocracy and European title holders came on December 23, 1889 when he commented on an entertainment organised in Madras in honour of the Prince of Wales who was then touring the country Here it goes

"The visit of the Prince is over. Others shall write the chant of flattery which shall commemorate the event with all the solemn and national importance of a

victory of the Baltic. The official report is only awaiting the reproduction of the binding of the jubilee record to astonish the world with the liberality of Madras citizens and the distribution of pre-arranged praise. I will undertake the humbler duty of chronicling one or two events and views which though it shall not expose one to a decoration or invite the cachet of *The Mail*, has the rare merit of plain truth. The young Zamindar of Ramnad has been snubbed. I think anyone who gives Rs. 1000 for fireworks and sweatmeats deserves nothing better. Bhaskaraswami Avargal will think twice before he wastes so much money again on so fond a purpose. But there is another side to this view. The Ramnad Zamindar is after all in spite of his donation an Indian Gentleman, like John Gilpin of credit and renown. On the night therefore of the Prince's entertainment in the Park, our young friend donned his best jewels and his cleanest linen and hurrying down early took up a ranking position on the then almost deserted dais reserved for the local aristocracy. Bhaskaraswami Avargal had deluded himself into the belief that his social position and handsome subscription — ten times as large as the largest subscription of the most loyal Englishman — would secure him a cordial and courteous welcome. Poor boy! He had not allowed for the peculiarities of Englishmen when dealing with Royalty. Scarcely had he taken his seat before the Deputy Commissioner of Police (C.I.E.) acting under the orders of Mr. Jones (C.I.E.) and the approval of Sir Thomas Weldon (K.C.B.), pushing past Sir Frederick Price (K.C.S.I.), Col. Moore (C.S.I.), Mr. A. T. Rose (C.I.E.), Sir Agur Chand (K.C.S.I.) and the Maharajah of Vizianagaram (with a whole division of field guns behind his name) precipitated himself like an avalanche upon the Zamindar and swept him into the shadows of the night and — despair. And why? Because the luckless individual who had given 10 times as much as any Englishmen on the dais, had not a white ticket printed in gold. The secret history whereof demands a paragraph to itself. It was invented in committee. It was whispered in heaven by its inventor and subsequently also in hell by the Zamindar. Its patentee is not now forthcoming. But Mr. Jones (C.I.E.) has been observed since its fiasco to have assumed a haggard appearance and a look of disappointed paternity which are both touching and suggestive. The failure of the scheme deprived Madras of the most amusing portion of the entertainment. Five and thirty of the most exalted of the local aristocracy were to have been grouped in a semi-circle on the dais round the prince. The humblest member of that assemblage would have been a Chief Secretary. The undoing of this last scheme is generally attributed to Mr. Gantz (C.I.E.) who would have thereby figured in the arc as Chief Secretary to the Reception Committee. Round this eminent assemblage the common herd including such riff-raff as Collector, District Judges, Barristers, Colonels, Clergymen, subalterns, doctors would have wandered reverentially, thankful that they were permitted by the decrees of our inscrutable providence to inhabit the same earth with so much magnificence. As the curtain rose 25,000 children trained by Mr. St. Leger (C.I.E.) and a Punjab athlete were to perform the difficult feat of demolishing simultaneously 25,000 buns, and the band would have struck up *God Save the Queen*. It sounds like a joke. But it was seriously proposed to put 35 dummies on the dais and exhibit them gratis to the public. The scheme, it is said, was spoilt by the ladies falling out among themselves. Had it succeeded Mr. Jones C.I.E. would have become Mr. Jones K.C.S.I. As it failed Mr. Jones will remain

Mr Jones C I E. The truth is that some men have gone mad over all this Prince hunting and medal hunting Mr Jones (C.I.E) was once about the sanest man in the presidency till this unhealthy epidemic unfortunately carried the best part of him off The funeral of his independence was largely attended and many an eye grew moist as it read the inscription on the coffin He was virtuous till he sniffed promotion The Ramnad Zamindar meanwhile has learnt two things, First, that he is classified among those who part easily with their money; secondly, that his European friends prefer his room to his company. The next time a prince comes the Ramnad Zamindar will think twice before he pays Rs 1000 to be insulted

"We have spent nearly Rs. 20,000 over the prince and cui bono? What have we to show for the money? Nothing but the efforts of those who have no decoration to get some and of those who have some to get more Was it worthwhile to spend Rs. 20,000 for that? The Government who plead poverty to the demands for a separation of the judicial from the revenue functions and who telegraph from Ganjam for a public meeting to be held here to aid famine relief, think nothing of granting Rs 3000 to be literally wasted in strips of coloured paper and little tin pannikins If this is evidence of loyalty I admit I am disloyal Mr. Surendranath Bannerjee was quite right to suggest the dedication of funds to some worthy and permanent memorial All the opposition and angry declamation is due, on the part of the Europeans to an aversion to being told of their folly in plain terms, on the part of the Indians to a wild belief that their offers of extravagance will either lead to fresh honours or at the least make them on more intimate terms with Government House"

Although Norton the columnist was soon out of print, Norton the politician was not. And The Hindu took cudgels on his behalf in January, 1894 when it heard a rumour that Norton's election to the Imperial Legislative Council was being thwarted by the machinations of a member of the Governor, Lord Wenlock's Council In an open letter to the Governor signed by "Madras" the Governor was told; "The public are anxious to know if it is true that Government is working through this person to defeat the election of Mr. Norton to the Viceroy's Council. It is openly whispered that it is so and the reputed intermediary would not at all seem to be anxious to dispel the rumour—if it is merely a rumour Why should the Government do such an unconstitutional act? It is not worthy of it. Nothing would please the public more than a declaration that any recent electioneering tactics by whomsoever resorted to has not the sanction open or tacit of your excellency's Government".

The Hindu's fears were however unwarranted for the next day (January 5, 1894) it announced the election of Norton to the Imperial Legislative Council. It said Norton was elected by six votes out of eight members of the Legislative Council present (one was against and another Mr. V Bashyam Iyengar abstained) and added: "Mr Norton has with his characteristic modesty stood aloof and his success which till yesterday evening was doubtful, will be regarded by the people throughout the length and breadth of this presidency as a matter for public rejoicing".

The Hindu's satisfaction however was not to last long On February 1, 1894, it reported: "We learn from Tanjore that Mr. Eardley Norton has wired to H. E. the Viceroy his resignation of the seat in the Viceroy's Council to which he was elected by the non-official members of the Madras Legislative Council

This, we believe, is in consequence of the complaint preferred against him by Mr W S Sullivan in the Presidency Magistrate's Court on Tuesday last".

Norton was involved in an adultery suit and his political career ended suddenly but not before the readers of *The Hindu* had ventilated their feelings on the whole affair. *The Hindu* was forced to apply closure on the correspondence as it said "We have received several letters on the unfortunate Norton incident. Seeing how easily the subject excites those that write on it and how no good purpose is served by the controversy we have resolved not to open our columns to letters from either side. We have therefore to decline all communications on the subject".

Norton came to the limelight again in July, 1898 when he contested the election to the Corporation of Madras from Triplicane and his candidature was opposed by M. Veeraraghavachariar one of the proprietors of *The Hindu*. Veeraraghavachariar supported the rival candidate Lodd Govindas and he had a letter to the Editor published under his own name in *The Hindu*. "Now that I have found a young Indian of good circumstances and ample leisure and public spirit coming forward to take interest in municipal affairs, I thought he deserved my support. I have always considered it a grave blunder on the part of my countrymen to keep out wealthy young men from taking active part in public affairs and at the same time to charge them with apathy and indifference to public weal. On these grounds I have decided to support the candidature of Mr Lodd Govindas and not out of any personal feeling of enmity against Mr Norton. The split which Mr Norton created in the Madras Congress camp in 1894, his violent personal attacks on those who honestly differ from him on public questions and his intolerance of diversity of views have made me believe rightly or wrongly that he is not the sort of man that will be acceptable, at any rate to a portion, of my countrymen".

*The Hindu* published the letter under a report of an election meeting addressed by Norton (whose speech was fully reported) and attended by the elite. *The Hindu* in an editorial kept a neutral attitude but made no secret of the fact that the odds were against Lodd Govindas and that he should have chosen some other constituency. It was now an unequal fight, it said, the disparity in ability was like between a cat and an elephant. Referring to Norton *The Hindu* said it did not approve of his recent speeches and attacks on persons "which were quite uncalled for". "That, however, is Mr. Norton's old way", it said. "Still we like him and have sincere admiration for him. For some time past Mr. Norton has been keeping aloof from public movements. We shall be happy to welcome his return to the political work which his old friends still carry on and in which his association with them once again will be a source of fresh encouragement and hope to the nation's cause".

In the event Norton was elected to the corporation council from Triplicane by a thumping majority and *The Hindu* congratulated him on his "magnificent victory".

Within two months of this incident in which the two proprietors of *The Hindu* appeared openly in their own newspaper on opposite sides, the partnership of G. Subramania Aiyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar was broken and G. Subramania Aiyer left *The Hindu*. Norton, who may have been responsible in accentuating the differences between the two founders, helped in drawing up

the document relating to the dissolution of the partnership but of this we may have to say more in a later chapter

The next we hear of Norton in the columns of *The Hindu* is in May, 1908 when he appeared in Calcutta as Government prosecutor in the Manicktollah bomb case in which Sri Aurobindo Ghose was one of the accused. When a pressman asked him about his attitude to the Congress he replied he had left the Congress in 1894. Later in the same year *The Hindu* printed an extract from a Calcutta journal in which Norton who had transferred his headquarters from Madras to Calcutta had made uncomplimentary remarks about Madras including a reference to Editors who he said were "occasionally called to Government House to offer explanations" *The Hindu* protested against this remark and said it was unaware of any Editor being called to Government House for an explanation.

When Aurobindo Ghose was acquitted in the bomb case *The Hindu* said the trial went on for a year because the prosecution tried its best to have Aurobindo convicted and in this connection it criticised Norton, who conducted the prosecution. It said the manner in which he had been presenting the case "has evoked disgust and disapproval" He had roamed over a wide area it added, "in which to fish out evidence against Aurobindo and in placing before the court statements and evidence which had no bearing on the case and in producing upon the judge the strong conviction that the prosecution wished very much to have Mr. Aurobindo convicted, Mr. Norton exceeded the bounds of his office as Crown prosecutor"

There was a sequel when Norton denied he made any statement to a representative of a Calcutta paper that he was not surprised at Aurobindo's acquittal. His letter was published in the journal along with another letter by the reporter who had interviewed him and who struck to his report and said Norton did make that remark.

And when Mr Norton left India in May, 1926 on retirement, *The Hindu* bade him an affectionate farewell. "Mr Norton has revealed a heart", it wrote, "whose affection for India is too deep for words. We wish Mr. Norton every happiness in his days of well-earned rest".

But the fire had gone out of Norton and his political views had not much advanced so much so in an interview at Colombo on his way back home he said India was not yet ready for Home Rule and must wait and work for it. And this was the man who according to C. Y. Chintamani in his book "Indian Politics since the Mutiny", made this stirring speech in the Madras Congress session in 1887. Replying to the charge of some of his countrymen that he was a "veiled seditionist", Norton said: "If it be sedition, gentlemen, to rebel against all wrong, if it be sedition to insist that the people should have a fair share in the administration of their own country and affairs, if it be sedition to resist class tyranny, to raise my voice against oppression, to mutiny against injustice, to insist upon a hearing before sentence, to uphold the liberties of the individual, to vindicate our common right to gradual but ever advancing reform — if this be sedition, I am right glad to be called a seditionist and doubly, aye, trebly glad where I look around me today to know and feel I am ranked as one among such a magnificent array of seditionists".

**T**HE HINDU had from the beginning not only fought for rousing the political consciousness of the people but also their social consciousness and obligations. It had said in April, 1889 when it became a daily: "We shall advocate with all our weight and influence such social reforms as are absolutely needed to give unity and harmony to our life under existing conditions even though we know that by doing so we shall array against ourselves in powerful antagonism the followers and upholders of orthodoxy"

In his crusade against the social evils of Hindu society the Editor of The Hindu, G. Subramania Aiyer, was much far ahead of his times and the fact that many of the reforms for which he fought through the columns of his paper and on the platform are still far from achieved even today shows the deep rooted strength of the forces against which he had to carry on his campaign.

In a speech in Madras in December, 1897, Subramania Aiyer said. "The Hindu community should pay the penalty of its past neglect. For centuries it has been away from the path of true progress. The peculiar social system of the Hindus worked well-enough so long as they were an independent and self-contained community. But it had within itself the seeds of decay because it was not a self-working system adapting itself to fresh environments as they arose. It was not designed to promote solidarity and a uniform progress of the whole. . . The civilisation we have managed to preserve through a series of unparalleled vicissitudes is antiquated and unsuited to modern conditions and however reluctant we may be to tear ourselves from the past and however difficult the process may be, we can only do our best to make the transition from the old order to the new as smooth as possible. . . It is wonderful how among us custom has usurped the place of reason, sentiment and religion itself as a standard of right and wrong. In our social relations it is recognised as a dominant motive of action"

Holding such strong views Subramania Aiyer used The Hindu as a vehicle for espousing reform in all directions. Widow remarriage, abolition of child marriage, abolition of caste, abolition of nautch parties, raising the age of marriage and uplift of the Pariahs (as Harijans were then called). His crusade while it did have its powerful impact also had its repercussions on the business side of his paper which began to suffer from its reformist zeal and the other partner, Veeraraghavachariar, had to cry halt which ultimately led to the

severance of his connection with *The Hindu* by Subramania Aiyer. We shall deal with this in more detail at the appropriate place.

In the beginning *The Hindu* admitted the need for caution in regard to social reform. Replying to the criticism of a British Indian administrator, Sir Auckland Colvin, that the Indians "are indifferent to social reform and that the Press is concentrating on politics", *The Hindu* wrote in September, 1884 "The struggles of the native minds in the matter of social reforms do not find expression in the columns of the Press. The Press is in the hands of those who do not want lecturing on those topics and it is addressed to those who can equally dispense with it. The struggle generally goes on at home, silently and without demonstration. In the educated community there is hardly any difference of opinion; the contention is mainly with the unenlightened and with women as a class".

Later *The Hindu* wrote "An earnest reformer is apt to recommend what he thinks to be easiest and the most effective means of accomplishing the desired reform. But we can exercise too much caution to avoid exciting the susceptibilities of the orthodox population and setting in motion the sweeping wave of reaction. The interference of the Government will as a rule attempt too much and will be misunderstood and resented by the masses". *The Hindu* wrote this editorial in the wake of many letters to the Editor on the question of widow remarriage and child marriages. *The Hindu* resiled from the stand it took not many months later and it went to the extent of advocating Government legislation even if the people were to oppose it.

*The Hindu* published an appeal by "a Gentleman who takes great interest in questions of social reform" to new graduates to support widow remarriage and set an example by helping the reform and made its own appeal to young men of the Community. "We have observed of late", it said, "a tendency on the part of some of our educated countrymen to apply their mental powers for irrationally reactionary purposes. Social customs and institutions which are evil in their results and are the products of past simpler and less civilised conditions, have received elaborate defence and even certain merits have been attached to them. The general community of educated natives has rejected them, if not all of them in practice but at least in their beliefs as injurious to social progress and as being inconsistent with modern civilisation. Yet we have seen even tolerably educated men setting up elaborate defences of them and even going to the length of denouncing the majority not agreeing with them as unpatriotic, denationalised and so forth. Such intellectual rather literary eccentricities, may be innocent pastime in Europe where the stock of social activity is superabundant. But in India where centuries of constructive uphill work has to be gone through, where society is in the infant stage of its renovated life, such reaction is greatly to be apprehended. We must be willing not only ourselves to admit our faults but to have them pointed out by others and pursue a vigorous and speedy course of self-correction and progress".

*The Hindu* in September, 1887, extracted in its columns a letter written to the *London Times* by Prof. Max Mueller on child widows in which the great Indologist and Sanskrit scholar had suggested that a school and a home for Hindu child widows, "for these waifs and strays of womanhood" as he called them, should be founded with a view to alleviate their miserable lot and to place before them chances of preparing themselves for an honourable and happy life. *The Hindu* said: "There are in India nearly 80,000 widows under nine



years of age and more than two lakhs under 14 years of age. That their lot is miserable no sane person will deny. They are the victims of a cruel custom brought into existence partly by the superstition of the Hindus and partly by Mahomedan tyranny. That the custom of infant marriage has no sanction in our ancient sacred books is admitted by all except those that are slaves to priestcraft and it has grown up as the combined effect of a decaying religion and of political subjection. But whatever the origin and explanation of this inhuman and horrible custom, it is now deeply rooted in the social system of the Hindus and to eradicate it is as difficult and requires as patient and self-sacrificing a labour as if it were sanctioned in the religious books. Reformers have naturally exaggerated the miseries and the lot of a Hindu widow and the letter of Pandit Ramabai (a Maharashtra widow who led the campaign for widow remarriage) which Prof. Max Mueller quotes is certainly guilty of exaggeration when she says that the child widow is cursed and cruelly treated not only by society alone but by her parents and relations. But making allowance for all this well meaning exaggeration the fact has to be admitted that the lot of our widows and the customs and institutions that are the cause of it are a disgrace to civilisation, to the Hindu religion, to the Hindu intellect and heart. Their lot presents a most painful contrast to the position that Hindu women enjoyed in ancient times when they were not only respected and honoured but exercised considerable influence on matters involving the wellbeing of the community as well as of their homes. As the Hindu race has degenerated in so many other things, in its religious, moral and material state, so has it in its ideal of womanhood, which is at once the forerunner and indication of a progressive civilisation. In no other civilised country does the cruel custom that afflicts our sisters and daughters obtain and whatever faults we may find in the institutions and manners of European nations, the high position they assign to their women and the honour they enjoy in their societies, ought to furnish us an incentive for steady, devoted and honest labour to wipe out this reproach on our society. We do not suggest indeed that European customs should be imitated, but none of us can deny that women there exercise a far greater and a more wholesome influence on domestic happiness and public welfare than women in India can ever hope to do in their present degraded condition".

Referring to Prof. Max Mueller's scheme, The Hindu said the scheme "has little chance of success. It is opposed to the spirit of Hindu society and will be looked upon with extreme disfavour. However we believe the institution might be made useful in one respect. Since the present agitation of social questions was commenced, many parents having widowed daughters have boldly expressed their desire to get their girls married again. But receiving no encouragement from the respectable portion of the community and not being able to procure boys of decent connections to marry their girls, they have had to give up their attempt. If there were an organised institution like the one proposed in which respectable men manifest interest, parents in this position might willingly take advantage of it. They might shift their residences to the place where the institution is situated and have their girls educated there under their care and guardianship. It will be a means of bringing in sympathetic contact a number of families afflicted with the same misfortune and also a band of influential and leading men of society whose sympathy and help will

be an encouragement to the unhappy parent . . . Whether after all the attempt succeeds or meets with a thorough failure we should like it to be made for the mere reason that it would contribute to the agitation of the public minds and the creation of a strong public opinion. It will commit a number of Hindus to a course opposed to those prejudices and sentiments that now effectively repress all attempts at revolt; and their example will stimulate others thus leading to a wider and wider sphere of thought and action. The subject will lose its aspect of monstrosity which it wears in the ordinary mind and the way will be paved for the present talk developing into action"

The Editor of *The Hindu* took the bold decision to put into practice what he preached through the columns of his paper. He remarried his daughter, Sivapriyammal, who became a widow while she was only 13, to a boy of his choice in Bombay in 1889 during the Congress session there. The marriage took place in the house of Raghunathdass, the great champion of widow remarriage in Western India and Raghunatha Row, the great social reformer of the South whom G. Subramania Aiyer accepted as his guru, officiated at the ceremony.

Charles Bradlaugh, Sir William Wedderburn and Sir Mahadev Govind Ranade were among the notables who witnessed the ceremony. There was the usual and anticipated boycott of Subramania Aiyer's family but the orthodox sections dared not excommunicate him even when the newly wedded couple were living with him. In fact some time later Subramania Aiyer gave away his second daughter in marriage in the orthodox style without any untoward incident and there was a bare announcement of this in *The Hindu*.

Tragedy however overtook Subramania Aiyer's family four months after his eldest daughter's remarriage. Mrs. Subramania Aiyer passed away and this gave some anxious moments to his friends and sympathisers. This was revealed in two Press comments on Mrs. Subramania Aiyer's death, one from Calcutta and another from Poona. The Calcutta paper said: "We deeply regret to notice the bereavement of another Congress chief—our colleague and friend, Subramania Aiyer of *The Hindu*. Madras is the chief stronghold of the Congress and the persistent, spirited and well reasoned advocacy of *The Hindu*—the leading daily in the Native English Press in India—and the untiring activity of the Editor have in a large measure brought about this result. Mr. Subramania Aiyer is at once a social and political reformer. As good as his word, he recently gave away his poor widowed daughter in marriage. Strangely enough he was not ostracised, evidence of the strength acquired by the reformers. But a great trial awaited him. Mrs. Subramania Aiyer died—we hope under no revulsion of feeling from their brave stand against popular error and antiquated custom. Then came the difficulty of how to dispose of her remains. On a previous occasion on the death of a person in a social reformer's house in Gooty none of the Hindus would go near the dead man nor assist in performing the last rites. Mr. Subramania Aiyer has been more lucky. Warned by experience, his friends headed by Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Row made prompt efforts and prevented any scandal. While sympathising with our colleague's loss we rejoice at this evidence of advance. Altogether the earnestness of the southern reformers and their deserved success ought to beholden us of Bengal"

The Mahratta of Poona wrote "It is with deep regret that we have to record the death of the wife of Mr G Subramania Aiyer, the Editor of *The Hindu*. The lady had been ill for a week or so and she ultimately succumbed to the disease on April 25 last. . . It is in December last when Mr Subramania Aiyer was in Bombay he freed by remarriage his poor virgin widowed daughter from the thralldom of widowhood which the apathy of the sastras and the rigidity of custom have rendered so very insupportable. Ever since his return to Madras, Mr Subramania Aiyer's position there has been peculiar. Even though ostracism is not rampant now as it once was, yet from the attitude of the orthodox party, the reformer friends of Mr Aiyer feared that unhappy incidents might render his position more embarrassing. The lamentable incident in his family was a crucial test of the progress of social reform in Madras. People feared that the miseries which befell the Gooty reformer would befall in the present case too. But thanks to the influence of the leavened few over the unleavened many, we are happy to note and it must give Mr Subramania Aiyer some comfort in his plight, that the funeral of the lady was not only unattended but that a purohit was secured and the obsequies according to the Sastras at the time of cremation and subsequent to it have been performed unimpeded". The Hindu carried on the campaign for social reform relentlessly and with renewed vigour. In May, 1891, Dewan Bahadur R Raghunatha Row wrote to *The Hindu* "I learn from public prints that a baby marriage will take place in Triplicane. If it be true, it shall be the duty of all members of the Marriage Association not to be present at such an occasion in pursuance of the pledge taken by them. It would be an excellent thing for the members thereof to announce their determination not to be present on the occasion so that all parties may know how many are prepared to stand by their pledge. I and Madhva Sastra Sampamna Maha Bhagavatacharya being members of the said association, we hereby announce that we shall not attend this or similar tomfooleries"

Later *The Hindu* in an editorial criticising child marriages noted that in the Triplicane marriage a few graduates in the neighbourhood when they were invited to be present at the marriage or to dine declined to comply with the invitation on the ground that they felt bound to discourage as much as possible such marriages. "This reflects honour on their education", *The Hindu* said, "and it is to be hoped that when their time comes to get their daughters or sisters married they will remember the importance of consistency in their conduct"

*The Hindu* mentioned a case in Triplicane, "citadel of orthodoxy" in which a child of one Thiruvengatatha Iyengar died from scorpion bite and because his father had married a virgin widow his community would not help him to cremate the child. However a few friends assembled on the scene and G. Subramania Aiyer sent his purohit to officiate at the rites. "Without subjecting the diseased's father to any difficulties the child's body was carried to the burning ground and cremated with the usual ceremonies", *The Hindu* said: "To the small band of social reformers it is a source of satisfaction that they were able to tide over the calamity without the least hitch or trouble"

On February 22, 1893 *The Hindu* carried a well displayed advertisement with the heading. "Wanted virgin widows to Marry". The advertisement spoke of two or three Brahmin young men of fair education and social position willing

to marry virgin widows of the Brahmin caste "For particulars", it said, "apply to Secretary, Madras Marriage Association, Mount Road"

The battle waged by The Hindu on behalf of Hindu child widows never ended and we hear its echoes in June 1905 when the issue became live again. A Brahmin of Porayar in Tanjore District, K. Subramania Aiyer, in a letter to the Editor offered to marry a virgin widow. The next day a woman reader who signed herself as virgin widow asked if Mr. Subramania Aiyer would marry a Sudra virgin widow. To this Mr. Subramania Aiyer replied "I answer in the affirmative. As the Shastras provide for the Brahmin the privilege of marrying a woman of any of the three lower castes (Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra) I am prepared to marry the widow in question with strict observances enjoined by the Shastras and am willing to live and move with her in such a way as not to injure any Brahminical principles in the least. I wish that she may communicate to me the full particulars necessary to effect the union". Whether the union did take place and the couple lived happily ever afterwards we do not know since The Hindu did not publish the information.

The controversy over virgin widows flared up again in October, 1912 following a letter from Prof. K. Sundaraman who criticised the view of V. S. Srinivasa Sastri that a "virgin widow is a blot on Hindu civilisation". Prof. Sundaraman said a virgin widow was a revered person in the house and never felt the promptings of the sexual instinct. S. Satyamurthi, who then lived in Purasawalkam, contested this thesis and said that Prof. Sundaraman gave away the case when he admitted that "child widowhood is a misfortune". Satyamurthi said this misfortune was not self-inflicted and not deserved "but is the result of a social system. No society has however the right to inflict any misfortune on individuals except when it is necessary in the interest of society".

To go back to 1892, The Hindu discussing the resolutions passed at the Social Conference held along with the Congress session in Nagpur disagreed with the view that social reforms should not be thrust on the people by any outside agency but must be the spontaneous outcome of the growing enlightenment of the people. "In our view", The Hindu said, "the possibility of any such thing taking place is so remote and the evils will tell so much on the welfare of the community in the meanwhile that this kind of remedy should be abandoned for the more practical and effective remedy of legislation in anticipation of popular consent". This was a sharp reversal of the earlier often expressed view of The Hindu that caution must be exercised in social reform to see that Hindu orthodoxy is not provoked by hasty legislation.

The changed attitude of The Hindu was already seen in the role played by the paper in the controversy over the Age of Consent bill which fixed the age of marriage for a girl at 12 instead of 10. The Hindu wrote supporting the bill and welcoming Government intervention and its columns were thrown open to readers who argued both for and against the legislation. The bill came up before the Imperial Legislative Council in January, 1891 and was passed in March of the same year.

In a bitter attack on Hindu orthodoxy The Hindu wrote in January, 1893, "The Hindu that offends the orthodoxy is not argued with but is persecuted and denied all the pleasures of association and the solace of religion. It is this intolerance that has killed individuality in this country. The arbitrary power

exercised by a section of the Hindu society has so far demoralised the whole that it has become utterly insensible to the needs of its own well-being. To exercise this arbitrary power without let or hindrance and without being answerable to any authority transcending it, to see its own capricious and fossilised regulations implicitly obeyed without regard to change and changing conditions, has become the end it is ever conscious of; it will even calmly face its own destruction rather than admit itself to be wrong in any respect and adopt change. It is otherwise inconceivable that any community with an intelligent self-consciousness should set its face as the Hindu community does, against its best material and educational interests being advanced by foreign travel and against the physical and moral stamina of its youths being improved by a more humane and more rational set of marriage customs. The Hindu nation cannot produce a great man, a man that can stand comparison with any of the glorious group of heroes, men of great originalities and moral power, of undaunted enterprise, who have made Europe the mistress of the globe, until it emerges from its present condition of constraint all round and arrives at a condition of greater freedom to individuals."

In the latter half of 1893 The Hindu mounted another arrow to its bow in its campaign for Hindu social reforms. This time it was against nautch parties. The Hindu had little time or desire to appreciate Bharata Natyam which was supposed to be the dance form practiced by the nautch girls in performances given by them at garden parties, marriages temple festivals etc. It considered the nautch parties as vulgar and indecent which appealed to the baser instincts of men and brought disrepute to Hindu society. It had supported a memorial presented to the Viceroy and the Governor of Madras by the Hindu Social Reform Association, urging these dignitaries not to attend nautch parties. When both the Viceroy and the Governor saw no reason to accede to the request of the memorialists, The Hindu said the objection to the nautch parties was that "they are directly suggestive of ideas of the grossest immorality and they are a species of moral canker eating up everything that is sacred and elevating in the domestic system". The Hindu added "Now that the first step has been taken we hope the Association will not allow the matter to drop out of recollection and whenever any invitation goes to the Governor, for that matter to any official, for a nautch party it must intervene with its protest expressed in the most unqualified terms".

In the course of its vigorous campaign The Hindu said in April, 1894, that there had been progress in the effort to put down the practice but "in order that this progress may be continuous and that no relapse may occur it is advisable to give publicity to prominent instances where a violation takes place". The Hindu proceeded to mention that nautch women formed part of the marriage paraphernalia of one Dewan Bahadur Venkasamy Row. "He has a large number of influential friends who all, we believe, attended the wedding... None of them however would appear to have had the courage to advise him to dispense with nautch. Indeed this softness of feeling, this disinclination to say unpleasant things, this shirking of a moral duty, is a great drawback in the national character. And we are not sure if the Hindu gentlemen of Mylapore who are known to be most intimate with Dewan Bahadur Venkasamy Row had expressed their abhorrence of the nautch to him, he would have insisted on following the mamool. The other party to this marriage are the sons of the late

Rai Bahadur T. Gopala Row. Some of the guests were men of high education and that with them the nautch should have found favour is not calculated to strengthen the hands of the reformers in their endeavour to put a stop to the introduction in respectable houses of disreputable women for singing or dancing”.

A few days later *The Hindu* published the following from its Tirupati Correspondent: “I am sorry to inform you that the nautch girl is yet holding a strong position even in the society of educated men. Mr V Sessa Aiyer, B.A., late District Registrar of Nellore, now a Vakil and also a member of the Taluq Board, is celebrating the marriage of his nephew. Yesterday being the fourth day there was the procession on an elephant kindly lent by the Kalahasti Zamindar. It was not a little disgusting to see a nautch girl leading the procession. Mr. V. Subramania Garu B. A. B. L., our popular District Munsiff, attended the procession. When will better days dawn on India?”

*The Hindu* rebuked the lawyers of Tanjore who entertained the Governor of Madras with a nautch party when he visited the town in August, 1898. “We grieve to see”, wrote *The Hindu*, “that the clever lawyers of Tanjore have so foolishly blundered over the entertainment of His Excellency. Tanjore is not the most favoured dwelling place of purity of any kind. It is there that litigation of the worst character is rampant and European liquors and dancing girls receive the utmost patronage. The leading men of Tanjore have by no means set a good example to their fellow countrymen of the district by giving to dancing girls such prominence in the programme. Perhaps the Governor’s hosts had each a number of favourites to patronise and to please and the number unavoidably swelled. We do not hesitate to characterise it as disgraceful that such an occasion should have been utilised to stimulate this dangerous and vicious tendency. Governors and other illustrious visitors for whose amusement the nautch is got up are too good natured to offend their hosts by manifesting their inward abhorrence of this practice; but we know it to be a fact that it is not so much to please the guests as to please themselves that our people are sometimes so partial to nautch girls”.

That the anti-nautch movement did have some effect on officials was seen from a circular which Mr. E. L. Thornton I C S, Collector of Trichinopoly, issued to his subordinates in May, 1905. The circular, which *The Hindu* published, advised his subordinates to let it be known that nautch parties should not be arranged in his honour as his sympathies were with the anti-nautch movement. “Unhappily”, the Collector said, “while dancing girls continue to occupy the present position, I cannot but feel their appearance arouses in a mixed audience feelings exactly the opposite of those I should wish to be entertained. And so long as this state of things prevails, it seems to me we must sacrifice the innocent pleasure the performance affords, to avoid the appearance or rather the suggestion of evil”.

The nautch girls however remained on the South Indian scene for a long time thereafter and liberation to them and the art they prostituted came through the efforts of a band of patriotic social workers late in the 1930s.

“S. V. V.”, the well known short story writer who figured in the pages of *The Hindu* every Saturday in the 1930s, wrote a series entitled “My wife and I” in September, 1930, in one of which he described a marriage and referred to the presence of two nautch girls in the procession in which the bridegroom was

taken to the bride's residence on the eve of the marriage "They (the nautch girls) walked in front in gorgeous raiments with studied grace, clinking the little bells tied to their ankles and stopped at every two steps to dance. They were sisters very much alike and were said to be experts in the art. But whether they were experts in dancing or not they were intoxicatingly beautiful and even more graceful than beautiful. They were the rage of the town and by a mere cunning, roguish look of the eye, could mercilessly play fast and loose on the passions of youth; and it was whispered that some young and middle aged lawyers also gave their hearts away in that direction. There was a regular crush around these maidens of God and even elderly people elbowed their way in, making it appear as if it was only to show the children the *tamasha*. One or two gentlemen with a puritanical soul remonstrated that it was absurd and that Ranganna (bride's father) should have known better, but the universal belief was that but for this feature the procession would have been dull. In those days there was no movement for emancipation of *devadasis*. Some stalwart high placed puritans started a movement called the anti-nauch movement and they even went to the length of boycotting marriages where nautches were arranged but the movement came to nothing"

The Hindu in 1893 held strong views on the caste system and anticipated Mahatma Gandhi by espousing the cause of the *Pariahs* (untouchables who were called *Harijans* after Gandhi took up their cause). The Hindu despaired of the *Pariahs* ever being able to improve their lot and supported the suggestion that they be handed over to the Christian missionaries since they could never hope to better their condition if they continued to remain in Hinduism. The Hindu noted that by far the greater portion of the work of the missionaries had been always directed towards the moral and material improvement of the conditions of the lower orders. "The degraded condition of the *Pariah*", it said, "and other kindred classes is notorious and the peculiarities of the Hindu social system are such that from this system no hope whatever of their amelioration can be entertained. For thousands of years the *Pariahs* and others have been in their present condition and Hindus have not shown the faintest indication of their being conscious of the condition of these classes. It is assumed that the miserable lot of the *Pariah* is as natural to him as is to the Brahmin his privileged and comparatively happy lot. There are not, of course, people wanting among us, even among educated Hindus, who argue that in as much as in every community in the world there are some low and some others high, there is nothing particularly discreditable to the Hindu community in the existence of a neglected and degraded class like the *Pariahs*. This argument will be perfectly sound if the distinction between the *Pariah* and the Brahmin were nothing more than the distinction between the high and low in Western countries. But there is absolutely no analogy in this respect between the two social systems. The social system of the West recognises no such standard of social position as birth. A cobbler's son, by his attainments, moral character and wealth, can ascend to a social position as honoured and honourable as that of the Prince of Wales himself. But let the *Pariah* get up all the *Vedas* by heart, let him be ever so well behaved and wealthy, he cannot claim equality with the vilest Brahmin, the notorious expert at forgery, or the inveterate drinker in the name of civilisation. This is the peculiar evil of the Hindu caste system. The abolition of caste, indeed, will not abolish inequality of social

position, but it will or ought to introduce a less objectionable and decidedly a more healthy standard of social respectability than the accident of birth, namely, the standard of character and character alone. This standard our caste system does not recognise and the Hindu nation having been familiar with this system during thousands of years has lost all consciousness of evil and when the action of the missionaries rouses the Hindus to a sense of its discreditable treatment of the lower castes, a feeble attempt is made at explanation and justification and patriotism takes shelter in far-fetched and imaginary analogies. It seems to us to be hopeless for the pariahs, by which term we mean lots of other people in the same condition, to expect redemption from anything that the Hindus might do and we appreciate Mr Srinivasaraghava Iyengar's wisdom in his suggestion that those lower classes should be left to be taken over and raised in the scale of civilisation by Christian missionary philanthropy."

The Hindu added "No amount of admiration for our religion will bring social salvation to these poor people. It is Christian missionaries alone that will and can educate them and advance their worldly well-being in all ways. If we cannot do this service to our low caste countrymen, if we cannot co-operate with Christian missionaries in their philanthropic work, let us not grudge these countrymen of ours the service of foreign beneficence and render the task of their regeneration more difficult than it need be."

The Hindu seemed to have departed from the extreme stand which it took in regard to the Pariahs and in reposing confidence in the Christian missionaries when in August, 1894 it wrote "The pariah's salvation lies in the caste Hindus being made to look upon the pariah with sympathy and interest and this change in their attitude can be brought about only by means of the educated sections of the community who may be expected to rise above the old inherited prejudices and regard the pariah as their fellow countrymen deserving of all possible assistance. What did then the pariah petitioners (to Government) hope to gain by describing their Brahmin countrymen as the "pestilent and accumulated dregs of ages" — an expression unmatched for its accuracy and elegance and betraying the true authorship of the memorial. A genuine pariah, a true member of that community will talk of the Brahmin with less rancour and with some regard and the description in the memorial can only come from an unthinking Christian bigot who put the occasion to use more to abuse his religious opponent than to vindicate the rights of pariahs".

The Hindu expressed its opposition to the caste system in May, 1896 in these words "When will our countrymen realise that our social defects stand seriously in the way of our industrial progress? Of all these none is so accursed as caste. The system of caste is an economic inequity as it is observed at present. It has made us paupers and it has brought our people under foreign domination. It is a wonder so few people seem to realise the disastrous results which have accrued from this most irrational and unnatural system".

How much The Hindu had taken the reform of Hindu society and the uplift of its women to heart could be seen from the care and attention it devoted to even such things as wearing of jewellery by women which is part of the Hindu tradition. It wrote in September, 1889 that the practice of women adorning themselves and their children in jewellery is "a wasteful and absurd practice". It added "Every one knows the danger to which this practice exposes our



children and half our highway robbery will cease if only our women do not carry on their person such valuable property. Not only is the custom objectionable on the score of personal danger but on the ground of economy also it is to be most strongly deprecated. Lakhs of rupees are being spent every year on jewels in Hindu families. Except the poorest class which lives from hand to mouth and which has absolutely nothing to save beyond the cost of its scanty and simple meal, every other class, not absolutely in want, spends a portion of the income on jewels. The middle and higher classes are notorious offenders in this respect. No sensible person can approve of the enormous waste of money which this habit involves. The loss of interest on the amount invested is not the only result but the jewels do not realise their cost when they come to be sold. It is by no means an overestimate of the case if we say that every man earning Rs. 100 a month spends at least ten times that amount for the jewels of his wife and children, and if the returns of the income-tax were examined we could estimate roughly what vast sums are thus thrown away without the least benefit to the country at large." The Hindu suggested that "by a little firmness educated men can resist to some extent the importunities of their wives. But woe to the husband who indulges his zeal beyond a certain point of prudence; we have often to value peace at home more than any other consideration and the educated Hindu who purchases domestic happiness at the cost of his conscience deserves more of pity than censure. As in the case of hundred other social evils, the education of our women is the best and most effective cure for this evil. The women must be able to see the folly of their ways and the reform will come to be effected of its own accord."

Sir C. Sankaran Nair provoked a controversy in December, 1904, when he said in a speech that India "will never and ought not to be called into the councils of the Empire until we show we have fully and frankly accepted those principles of equality and brotherhood upon which the British Government is based. Those principles are utterly repugnant to the caste system as understood and practised among us". Sankaran Nair was criticised for saying this by a reader of *The Hindu* who called himself "plainspeaker". The Tamil poet Subramania Bharati came to Sankaran Nair's rescue with a letter in which he said "What the eminent social reformer means to say is simply this. There can be no political emancipation without the feeling of nationality. There can be no feeling of nationality where the caste system is prevalent or rather say (as some hypercritical men want us to believe that the caste system is prevalent in all human communities) where the *Jati* system is prevalent, the wonderful system which makes a Pariah philanthropist inferior to a Brahmin go-between. Is it doubted in any quarter that in England a cobbler boy with necessary merit finds his path clear to the Premiership? And is it not treason in India to believe that a Sudra (not to speak of a Panchama) with an unparalleled knowledge of Sanskrit scripture and with exceptional goodness and piety can ever aspire to the see of Sringeri? Why will people be so wilfully blind? Why do they refuse to find any difference between a mountain and a molehill? Where is Great Britain and alas! where is India? The National Congress, I readily concede, has some of India's best sons in its ranks and its aspirations are of the worthiest. But does anybody seriously believe that a man who in his stony heart condemns a babe widow to perpetual misery might be worthy to be placed at the helm of a rising people? Impossible". Bharati, who signed himself as a

member of the Madras Social Reform Association, added "Without social reform our political reform is a dream, a myth, for social slaves can never really understand political liberty. And until and unless our social conferences prove a success our National Congress is nothing but glare and dust"

Leo Tolstoy had something to say of the Indian caste system in a letter to the Madras journal *Arya* in September, 1901 which *The Hindu* reproduced and commented upon in its editorial columns. Tolstoy who wrote on the duty of all civilised Indians" said. "I quite agree with you that your nation cannot accept the solution of the social problems which is proposed by Europe and which is no solution at all. A society or community kept together by force is not only in a provisory state but is a very dangerous one. The bonds that keep together such society are always in danger of being broken and the society itself is liable to experience the greatest evils. In such a position are European states. The only solution of the social problem for reasonable beings endowed with the capacity of love is the abolition of violence and the organisation of society based on love, mutual and reasonable principles, voluntarily accepted by all.

Such a state can be attained only by the development of true religion. By the words "True religion" I mean the fundamental principles of all religions which are: the consciousness of the divine essence of the human soul and respect for its manifestation — human life. Your religion is very old and very profound in its metaphysical definition of the relation of men to the spiritual all — to the atman; but I think it was maimed in its moral, i.e., practical application to life by the existence of caste. This practical application to life, so far as I know has been made only by Jainism, Buddhism and some of your sects such as Kabir Panchis, in which the fundamental principle is the sacredness of life and consequently the prohibition to take the life of any living being, especially of man. All the evils that you experience — the famine and what is still more important the depravement of your people by factory life — will last as long as your people consent to kill their fellowmen and to be soliders (sepoys). Parasites feed only on unclean bodies. Your people must be morally clean. I think the duty of all civilised Indians is (1) to try to destroy all old superstitions which hide from the masses the principle of true religion, i.e., consciousness of the divine essence of human soul and respect for the life of every human being without any exception and (2) to spread them as far as possible. I think these principles are virtually if not actually contained in your ancient and profound religion and need only to be developed and cleared from the evil that covers them. I think only such a mode of action can liberate the Indians from all the evils which now beset them and will be the most efficacious means to attain the goal which you are now looking for"

The Hindu commenting said: "These words deserve our best consideration, coming as they do from one whose sincerity and earnestness, whose genuine love and sympathy for his fellowmen, whose ascetic life and great personal example have already made him a stupendous force in Europe. There are however some points in the letter on which we may not be in absolute agreement; for instance his almost idealistic enunciation of love and complete absence of force as the principle of a society and his opinion that our religion has failed in its application by the existence of caste. But few would find any ground for divergence of opinion with the appeal with which he closes his letter, an appeal which has its counterpart in his pathetic address to Europe to

give up false Christianity, false ideas of work and conquest and revert to the true teachings of that 'Man who of all others has been the one most misinterpreted and misunderstood'

# The London Correspondent

## —Who was he?

9

**I**S IT POSSIBLE for an editor not to know the identity of a correspondent who had been over the years every fortnight regularly sending him news letters from the Capital of the British Empire? This may sound strange but this was true of the Editor of The Hindu. As we have noted already, a strong and popular feature of The Hindu were the news letters of its London Correspondent which were published on the Leader Page under the general heading 'Indo-British Topics'. The letters were pretty long and gave exhaustive information on political happenings in England and on Indian questions discussed in Parliament and in the Press and platform.

In July, 1889 Christian missionaries working in India, who felt aggrieved by some of the disclosures made by the London Correspondent on the activities of missionaries in India in his fortnightly letters, made the charge in a missionary journal, the Methodist Recorder, that the Correspondent was one Rev. Dr. J. A. Lunn, who had access to information about the missionaries. Incidentally, the missionaries also complained that Dr Lunn was serving a "heathen paper". The London Correspondent in a letter to the Editor of the Methodist Recorder (a copy of which The Hindu published) denied he had anything to do with the Rev Dr Lunn and said all his information about missionaries came from their journals which he religiously read and information about which he thought would be of interest to readers in India. As to serving a "heathen newspaper", he said: "Permit me to deprecate and to protest against the contemptuous tone adopted by some of your correspondents regarding the "heathen newspaper", it gives me pleasure to serve, and its conductors. The Editors of The Hindu, Mr G. Subramania Aiyer B.A., and Mr M. Veeraraghavachariar B.A. are gentlemen of high character, they are scrupulously fair in argument, moderate in assertion, patient under calumny, citizens of good repute and zealous in all that will uplift, sweeten and purify the public life of India. In matters of faith they and I do not see alike. Nevertheless, I honour them and am proud of their friendship and resent any imputation cast upon them as I would imputation cast upon myself. As my writing for The Hindu is anonymous, as I believe in real and not in sham anonymity, I must ask you to let me enclose my card for your information and for the information of anyone who has a right and even a desire to know my name and to sign myself your obedient servant".

In a note under the copy of the letter which he published, the Editor of the Hindu wrote "After Dr Lunn's categorical statement that he was not the London Correspondent of The Hindu and we did not even know who that Correspondent was, we did hope his traducers would for very shame say no more, at any rate about that charge. But we underestimated the recklessness and the infatuation of those who are trying to ruin him. Last week the *Methodist Recorder* printed in its largest type and in its most conspicuous columns the substance of the portentous document which Dr. Rigg read to the Special Committee. The writer who calls himself "Inquirer", first proves by copious extracts that no honest methodist could possibly have been the London Correspondent of The Hindu. He then proceeds to argue that the writer must be an Englishman with "special information about Paddington, familiar with the methodist affairs, acquainted with Dr. Jenkins, intimate with the friends of missions and much in the habit of using the now famous phrase, "the forward movement". No ordinary reader can doubt that this statement is intended to insinuate that Dr. Lunn is the London Correspondent in the teeth of his absolute disclaimer. . . . The Editor of the *Methodist Recorder* in his note on this letter to which he gives the most conspicuous publicity in his power does not echo the insinuation of "The Inquirer" but he does go so far as to say that "in all probability Dr. Lunn has unconsciously supplied information either directly or at secondhand which has found its way to the London Correspondent and so into this heathen newspaper". We must now inform our readers of the unexpected and providential train of circumstances which enables us to prove beyond dispute that the suggestion of the Editor of the *Methodist Recorder* is as absolutely untrue as the insinuation of the correspondent whom he encourages with his biggest type".

The Editor of The Hindu went on to say that following a fortunate intervention of a *Methodist Recorder* reader, Dr. Lunn was able to know the name of the London Correspondent and later met him. The result was a letter from the Correspondent to the *Recorder* which the Editor promised to publish and a copy of which was published by The Hindu.

Talking about the Correspondent, the Editor wrote: "As the Correspondent wishes to maintain his anonymity we will only say of him that in 1885 he was a Liberal candidate for a metropolitan constituency, that he is, we believe, a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire, that he formerly edited an important newspaper in South India, and is a well known authority on Indian questions. He has no connections whatever with us, and like Dr. Lunn, we had not the remotest conception until last Thursday who The Hindu Correspondent was. Thus vanishes like a night fog the dreadful attempt to blast Dr. Lunn's reputation. It is difficult to censure too severely the reckless and malicious credulity of the Indian missionaries who have been deluging the Mission House and their numerous friends in this country with letters accusing Dr. Lunn of complicity with The Hindu".

The mystery of the London Correspondent still remained so far as the reader was concerned. His anonymity was not revealed and to this day we do not know who he was. But from the particulars furnished about him by the Editor a possible guess is that the Correspondent was William Digby, former Editor of Madras Times (1877-79) who was awarded C.I.E. for his services during famine

relief operations in Madras in 1878-79. He was connected with the British Committee of the Indian National Congress in London.

The Hindu received a letter of appreciation from a Christian missionary, Thos. Evans who writing from Mussorie in September, 1889 said 'Though a Christian and a missionary and despite some anti-Christian articles which appear at times in the pages of The Hindu, I feel bound to say that the progress which the paper has made in style, size and talent during the last few years and especially since the issue of it as a daily journal is most marked and praiseworthy. While at Ootacamund in 1886 I first saw a copy of The Hindu I must confess that the change in it in the course of three years is highly creditable to those who have charge of the paper. I do not know what patronage it receives from the English speaking native population of the Madras Presidency, but one thing is certain, a paper of such popular utility and so ably conducted deserves the liberal support of the whole Presidency and as there are such a large company of native gentlemen in every city of Southern India who know and can use the English language so fluently I imagine for The Hindu a large circulation'.

The correspondent was right about the popularity of The Hindu during this period. The paper's size was increased from its original eight into ten pages and it went up to twelve pages from October, 1893, it carried more pages of advertisement almost on a par with the news pages. Some of the early and consistent advertisers were P. Orr and Sons (Watches and Jewels), Spencer and Co., Lawrence and Mayo (Spectacles), Madras Railway and Co. and Varadachari and Sons (Book-sellers).

The Hindu had two kinds of subscribers the high class and the ordinary. The lower rate was Rs. 2 per month and the higher rate Rs. 3 with postage. All reading rooms and gentlemen with an income above Rs. 200 a month were charged the higher rate. There were in addition to the daily a tri-weekly edition with a monthly subscription of Rs. 1 (City) and Rs. 1.8 0 (Mofussil) and a weekly edition at 12 annas a month. All subscriptions from the mofussil were acknowledged in the columns of the daily, thus saving clerical work and accounting.

According to one writer by 1885 The Hindu had the second largest readership in South India and it threatened the virtual monopoly of the British owned newspapers. It was popular with lawyers and officials and was patronised in every reading room and in the literary circles of the Presidency. It was considered as the authoritative spokesman of the well-to-do and the educated, especially the professional classes.

The feature "News and Notes" which began in The Hindu from the very beginning and continued for over 50 years was a treasure house of information of human interest from all over the world, not excluding India, culled from newspapers and periodicals Indian and foreign. Here are two typical items which appeared one day in 1885. "In Russia a polygamist has been acquitted by the Court which tried his case on the ground that the Penal Code refers to bigamy and does not extend to polygamy".

"An itinerant Buddhist Preacher lately made an application to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Kandy (Ceylon) that he might be permitted to preach in the court house in order to deter the witnesses who attended it from lying which he said they greatly indulged in. His benevolent offer was however as a matter of course declined".

Here is another item which appeared in 1895. 'A gentleman of education and position in Lahore brought 20 fowls as a present to his departmental officer the other day. The officer declined to take them on which the subordinate urged that it was a custom with his community that on a first visit to one's superiors something should invariably be taken as a present. The officer declined to accept the present and said some Babu would send the news to the *Tribune* (of Lahore) if he did so.

The Hindu editorials were not always serious and confined to politics or social and economic problems. The Editor kept his eyes and ears open and he could see and comment on a human interest story almost at his doorstep as when *The Hindu* criticised the Madras High Court for its judgement in a police case in 1889. In this case a temple trustee in Mylapore was accused of pushing a police constable and throwing his cap away during a temple procession in which the constable on duty objected to the trustee walking ahead of the procession. In the lower court the trustee was awarded a term of imprisonment and a heavy fine which were confirmed by the High Court.

The Hindu wrote, "It is not often that we comment on the decisions of our tribunals. But the case before us with the remarks of the magistrate and the Chief Justice, is calculated to strike terror in the hearts of the usually law abiding population of this presidency and we shall be wanting in duty if we fail to point out what effect they will have on the conduct of the police. The learned Chief Justice says that the offence is a grave one. We shall take for granted that all the facts are proved. They amount to an assault on a police officer. The police officer is required to keep order among the crowd. Is it credible that the police constable honestly believed that the presence of the Dharmakarta of the temple in front of the procession would cause a disturbance of the public peace? The learned Chief Justice would have had considerable experience of English life. Would an English judge sentence a respectable citizen of London to a term of rigorous imprisonment and a comparatively heavy fine for causing the hat of the police constable to fall from his head? Why should such a serious view be taken in this country of an offence which in England would be dismissed with a warning to the offender? The learned Chief Justice is reported to have said that the aggravation lay in the prisoner having attempted to defend himself. This is an extraordinary dictum which we hope will not be adopted as a precedent by the magistrates. That the magistrate found discrepancies in the evidence for the defence does not necessarily lead to an inference that these nine witnesses perjured themselves. We emphatically beg to differ from this pronouncement of law. If the learned Chief Justice stays in the country some time longer he will find that the police constables are not the most reliable witnesses and those who oppose their testimony are not necessarily perjurers. The Chief Justice had insisted on a withdrawal of the defence. We do not know much of law but the little that we know of makes us think that a defence once set up in a criminal case if allowed to be withdrawn will land the withdrawer in a series of prosecutions for false charges etc. We cannot understand how in fact a mere defence could be said to be a charge against the police and how it could be withdrawn. On the other hand, the learned judge ought to have sat in judgement upon the magistrate for having allowed extrajudicial considerations to weigh with him in passing the sentence. What is it to Parthasarathy Chetty (the accused) that others have assaulted other

constables? Why is it necessary that the public should receive a warning at his expense? We are astonished that the judges of the High Court had nothing to say against the judgment of the magistrate who did not confine himself to the facts of the case in pronouncing judgment. We are very sorry for the result of this case for it will embolden the dregs of the police force to exercise the worst tyranny on respectable people, who if they attempted to defend themselves, would make themselves liable to imprisonment and a comparatively heavy fine."

People continue to commit nuisance on the beautiful Marina in Madras even today as they did in olden days but it did not escape the notice of The Hindu whose editorial in 1895 was an eye-witness account of an incident.

"Strolling along the walk in the Marina the other day", The Hindu wrote, "we perceived some white big thing peeping out upon passers-by from amid the green hedge on one side. Closer inspection revealed this to be the turban of a well-dressed and to all appearance an educated Hindu, who was in the act of committing nuisance in the most orthodox fashion. Curious to catch a glimpse of the physiognomy of a gentleman so keenly sensible of decency we waited and not in vain. For hardly had our educated indecent man stood up when two friends of his accosted him and shaking hands with them, the barbarian walked off with the air of one who had performed the most conscientious act imaginable. Now, we do not know who the man was, nor is it necessary that we should. He looked like a High Court Vakil and for ought we know, may one of these days stand for a seat in the Legislative Council and succeed. He may even prove himself a successful interpellator of Mr. Bliss and Mr. Grose (Executive Councillors). But would it any way imperil his efficiency in any respect if he did this thing out of sight of the Queen's subjects, by preference in some secluded part of his own dwelling? We do not think it would. And we do hope he would do so hereafter at any rate. We would also suggest that a latrine should be erected at some distance for the bandstand for the convenience of persons such as the one referred to here".

The Hindu was very harsh not only on erring officials who were living but also on those who were dead. It did not believe in hiding their faults while writing their obituaries. This is what it wrote in 1889 on the death of a judge

"We exceedingly regret to have to announce the death of Mr. T. Ganapathy Aiyer, Sub-Judge of Kumbakonam. Mr. Ganapathy Aiyer although he was not a very brilliant officer, was yet very popular with the bench, with the litigants and the community at large. While lacking any very high legal acumen, he possessed almost to perfection other qualities which as well as a deep knowledge of law go to constitute a model judge. It was his misfortune to have gone wrong in his earlier years in the selection of friends and companions and added to this the example of some of his nearest relations led him into costly and questionable habits which soon immersed him in debts. Few men would have resisted the temptation of their official position to use its advantages to get over such embarrassment as overtook Mr. Ganapathy Aiyer. But Mr. Ganapathy Aiyer's firmness was remarkable and he spurned with indignation any attempt to palter with his character as a judicial officer. We believe that he was deeply indebted when he died but he has left behind him as a responsible native official a reputation which many of his brother officials might envy. Yet with all his good qualities we have to acknowledge with sorrow and humiliation that



his comparatively premature death records in the Book of Time a warning to posterity against the disastrous effect on careless living, neglecting the limits which nature places to indulgence in our lower physical cravings. Will our younger generation learn from the numerous examples they behold before them almost every day of the value of temperate and careful living?"

The pages of *The Hindu* in October, 1893 were full of reports of a shameful incident involving British soldiers in Guntakal and the way a British judge and jury dealt with the offenders.

On October 4, 1893 some British soldiers while on their way from Wellington in the Nilgiris to Secunderabad camped at Guntakal. While strolling in the town they saw two young women returning to their village and chased them. The women fled in panic to the nearby gatekeeper of a railway levelcrossing, Hampanna — who opened the door of his cabin to them and locked it. The soldiers failed to make him open the door and one of them shot him. Hampanna later died from his wounds. Ashford, one of the soldiers, who was arrested and charged with the crime was acquitted by the Madras High Court. While the *Madras Mail* hailed the verdict as just *The Hindu* condemned it as another instance of racial prejudice.

*The Hindu* wrote on February 9, 1894 "The trial of Corporal Ashford for the murder of Hampanna, the gatekeeper at Guntakal, terminated today at 2 p.m. in the discharge of the prisoner. That he had shot Hampanna dead was proved and admitted but his plea of self-defence weighed with the jury who accordingly brought in a verdict of "Not guilty". We need hardly observe that this verdict will be received with painful surprise throughout the country". After analysing the evidence *The Hindu* said "A number of soldiers rush in to outrage two women; a poor native heroically resists them with a stick in hand and he is shot down dead. This, we are told, is self-defence! The least we can say today is that this Ashford case affords another example of the almost sure miscarriage of justice where a European is the offender and a native the victim".

Writing again two days later on the Guntakal murder case verdict, *The Hindu* asked "Is there any safety for the natives of the country from the ravages of European soldiers? This is the question which naturally occurs to anyone who hears of the verdict in the Guntakal murder case. We do not hesitate to say it is decidedly a perverse verdict".

A reader who signed himself "Nemesis" wrote: "You have but faintly echoed the deeply wounded Indian public feeling on the verdict of the highest tribunal of justice(?) on the cowardly murder of Hampanna by a British soldier. What is justice? It is as they make it. Except the defence counsel, who is professionally bound to make a mountain of a molehill, the rest of them, the Chief Justice, the gentlemen of the jury, nay, Mr Mullaly, the detective police officer, have hardly come out of this affair with any credit".

A "Non-Professional European" wrote: "The verdict given in this *cause celebre* will be a disappointment to many, even to many Englishmen, surprising as this statement may seem to those who cry out about racial feeling. But the official or semi-official section of Anglo-Indians is not the only section and there are many who have studied the case with interest and received the verdict with pain, bitter pain because somehow soldiers seem always to escape in affairs of this sort and therefore their idea about the cheapness

of natives' lives is not corrected. The Guntakal murder case is the latest addition to a long and melancholy list of failures of justice"

The Hindu welcomed a suggestion to erect a memorial for Hampanna and published the names of those who sent in donations. The Manager of the paper prepared a large stone tablet from the Poonamalle quarries and sent it to Guntakal. A piece of ground was purchased near the place where Hampanna was murdered and his remains were gathered and interred there and the memorial tablet was erected. The inscription on the tablet said "Here lie the remains of Goolapalieu Hampanna, the Gatekeeper who, while defending two Hindu women against a party of European soldiers near the Guntakal Rest Camp was shot by one of them on October 4, 1893. He died here on October 5. Raised by European and Indian admirers"

The authorities were very much upset and attempted to demolish the memorial and also wanted to prosecute the Gooty Correspondent of The Hindu, Kesava Pillai, who was responsible for exposing the brutality of the crime. Lord Wenlock, the Governor, however ordered that the monument be left alone.

The Hindu paid a high tribute to the veracity, sincerity and spirit of public service of its mofussil correspondents and its own constant efforts to check the accuracy and credibility of the stories it published from them when it crossed swords with the Madras Mail on a report in The Hindu from its Anantapur correspondent in February, 1896. The report mentioned the misdeeds of British soldiers while marching from Bangalore to Secunderabad. The Madras Mail published a contradiction of the story by the Collector of Anantapur and utilised the occasion for a virulent attack on the native Press for publishing material without verification.

Inaspirited reply The Hindu wrote. "What the Editor of The Hindu does in his office room to keep out of its columns all contributions that are of an objectionable character and to verify the statements of his correspondents the Madras Mail does not know and we suppose our contemporary is pleased with himself when he believes that he is himself infallible and asserts that native journals as a rule do not verify the statements of their correspondents and are guilty of many things done and left undone. Impartial judges will, however, distinguish between Indian and Anglo-Indian Journals in regard to their policies, motives and ends. Anglo-Indian journals have not the same inducements or interest as Indian journals have in watching the administration in the districts and calling public attention to official misdeeds. If in its endeavour to discharge its duty in this respect, The Hindu is occasionally misled by its correspondents, who, by the way, are men of high education and experience and quite reliable generally, it should not be assumed that it is wanting in a due sense of its responsibility and exercises no caution in accepting the statements of its correspondents. The Government and the public will readily admit, we trust, the service that our correspondents render by their criticisms on local affairs. Nor can it be denied that these criticisms are generally temperate and well founded. If in the article in question our correspondent has been himself misled and has unconsciously misled us too, we should most readily express our regret at the unfortunate circumstance"

"Contradiction contradicted", this was the heading given to another editorial on February 12 on the same subject when The Hindu said its further

enquiries had established that its correspondent's report was not entirely unfounded

On another occasion *The Hindu* directed its attention to what it called an "obscene question paper" for a senior class in a girls High School in Travancore State. "The questions", it wrote, "have decidedly the effect of exciting sensuality rather than a taste for knowledge and love making rather than examinership should have been the proper function assigned to this man (examiner), although even in love making there should be more decency than is apparent in this paper. It is simply shameful that a man with such tastes and tendencies should have anything to do with education of any kind and we hope if the Government have not removed him from service it will do so without further delay".

The matter was referred to by the British Resident, Mr Rees, at the College Day function of the Maharaja Girls College in Trivandrum when he said that the Travancore Government has publicly censured all those who were connected with the setting of the obscene question paper. He added that the Government has "expressed its determination to make the recurrence of misconduct impossible—a misconduct which in the Government's own words 'cannot but shake the confidence of the public in regard to the development of female education—a cause the safeguarding of whose best interests is to it a matter of serious concern'". *The Hindu* in a footnote added "Mr Rees himself does not think that the examination paper is capable of excuse or defence".

Although *The Hindu* had not developed a sports page in the 1890s, since sports as conceived at a later period were practically unknown in Madras, it did show particular interest in one game, cricket. It reported county cricket matches in England briefly and also matches played in Madras itself. In fact it protested against racial discrimination at Chepauk Cricket ground during the final match in a cricket tournament between the Presidency and the Central College teams. Invitations to the match had been issued to "native gentlemen", by the President and members of the Committee of the Madras Athletic Association. The report in *The Hindu* said: "The few native gentlemen were first accommodated within the Gymkhana pavilion but in the afternoon, Mr Chatterton, Secretary of the Athletic Association, told them that they must find their places either in one of the out of the way tents or under the green trees, the reason being that European ladies and gentlemen were expected in the evening and that therefore native gentlemen should not be there."

Is this not a fine object lesson", asked *The Hindu*, "to those that plead for a freer social intercourse between Europeans and Hindus"?

The London Correspondent of *The Hindu* introduced to its readers the famous Ranjit Singhji in the following report in June, 1895

"It may be some matter of interest to Indian readers to know that an Indian and not an Englishman is the champion Cricketer of the year so far. Mr Ranjit Singhji who is now a member of the Sussex County Club very nearly won a victory for his side by his own prowess over the renowned Marleybone Cricket Club and the great champion, W.G. Grace. Mr Ranjit Singhji's achievements have been ungrudgingly recognised by the Press here generally."

The Correspondent then quoted this from *St James Gazette*: "The brilliant achievement of Kumar Shri Ranjit Singhji, the young Indian Prince, at Lords on

Saturday when playing for Sussex against some of the finest bowlers in England, he scored 150, reminds us once again of the cosmopolitan character of the game which until a few years ago was essentially English. The natives of India, as Lord Harris could thoroughly prove, have been fascinated by the pastime as if by magic and play it with a zest rivalling that of Englishmen themselves. But India has never produced a cricketer of such ability as Prince Ranjit Singhji and his performance on Saturday will obtain for him a very high position among cricketers of the day "

The Hindu Correspondent also quoted an eye-witness account of Ranjit's performance. "No big scorer among English players", the report said, "ever received a greater ovation than that which greeted the young Indian cricketer when he left the field. For the first time in the history of English sports a native of India was given the rare privilege of playing in a first class county match"

Overjoyed at the success of an Indian in an English game The Hindu wrote "The account given of Ranjit Singhji by English writers must be highly gratifying to his countrymen. It is really a remarkable feat that a Rajput Hindu should win the highest distinction and beat Englishmen themselves in what they call with pride their national game. His ability as a cricketer has received the highest praise from persons who have preceded him in fame . . . That this native of India should surprise Englishmen in the game of cricket is a significant sign of the times. It shows that with suitable opportunities and under favourable conditions, the Hindu will distinguish himself not merely in those functions and activities which are deemed peculiar to his nation but also in others which are now regarded as transcending the capabilities he has inherited"

Ranjit Singhji was in Madras on a brief visit in April, 1898 on his way back home from England via Colombo. The Hindu sent a reporter to interview him and what he got was a political interview and this was the report published: A representative of The Hindu met Ranjit Singhji by appointment this morning at his rooms at the Capper House Hotel, but the time he could spare for him was so short, the Prince having to meet a number of visitors who were waiting for him in the drawing room that all that could be had with him was but an informal and hurried conversation at the close of which the following impressions were gathered.

The enormous popularity of the Prince in England and elsewhere was due to his achievements as a cricketer. It was doubtful if he would have achieved half as much fame and popularity in politics even if he had been twice as successful in it as he was in cricket. As a matter of fact however he had not turned his thoughts to politics and had no opportunity whatever of gauging our political chances in England. He had no reason to believe as far as his opportunities and observations went that the English people had any unfavourable opinion about the intelligence and political aptitude of Indians. Their knowledge of our country and of our people was mainly derived from what the Christian missionaries told them but he did not believe that it could help them to form right estimates of the attainments and aspirations of our people. Latterly they have been provided with other means, such as those we ourselves have set up there, of deriving new information about ourselves, or of verifying those already obtained, but he was afraid they were not being as much used as desirable. One great disadvantage against us is the distance between the two countries which rendered speedy communication impossible. Indians visiting

England to inform the people of the affairs of this country were courteously received and heard. He could not say anything about the prospects of an agitation in England as he had not turned his thoughts to active politics. The Prince often wished to be spared further questions about Indian politics in England which was quite foreign to him. And he having been already milched dry in his special field of cricket, the interview was well nigh closing. The interview having exceeded the time originally proposed to be taken up, our representative returned an apology for it and released the Prince for other visitors whose number had increased by this time"

A report in *The Hindu* on April 28, 1898 said: "Yesterday morning Prince Ranjit Singhji played cricket in Mr. Buchi Baboo's residence in Mylapore and during the day he paid a visit to the High Court and there he was taken round by Mr. Syed Hashmi Bilgrami and spent some time in listening to the forgery case at the sessions. At about 5 p.m. he was entertained by the Professors of the Presidency College in their chambers. This over, he was welcomed in the Presidency College by a multitude of students from several of the local colleges. In his address to the students Ranjit spoke of the value of cricket. Cricket as played in England, he said, taught one a good deal of science, moral science, discipline and order and there was no quarreling or disputing the umpire. Everything in the cricket field was done to time and order and even among the crowd order prevailed during the match. There were moral principles in cricket. He advised members of cricket teams to unite and play with love and harmony.

During his three-day stay in the city, the Prince was feted and entertained by various clubs and associations and *The Hindu* carried full reports of the functions.

**T**HE SHEET ANCHOR of The Hindu's policy towards alien rule from its inception had been intense loyalty to the throne bordering on worship of the Empress and distrust and disquiet about the activities and conduct of the British bureaucracy in India. The necessity to reaffirm allegiance to the throne and sing the benefits of British rule again and again was forced on The Hindu by its Anglo-Indian contemporaries who were ever doubting it and creating ill-feeling towards the Indian owned newspapers among the rulers in India and Britain. The Hindu carried on a long slogging match with these alien-owned and run journals and this would require a separate chapter by itself.

But there is no doubt The Hindu sincerely felt at that time as Gokhale and other Indian leaders felt, that British connection with India was "divine ordained" and could never be broken. And The Hindu missed no occasion to emphasise this fact repeatedly.

When the Duke of Clarence, Queen Victoria's grandson, died in his 28th year in 1892, The Hindu announced the sad event in a black bordered editorial and expressed India's grief at the bereavement of the Empress. It followed it up with another editorial suggesting that condolence meetings should be held in all capital cities and towns and that sympathy and consolation which the sore royal hearts so much needed should pour on them from their loyal people. The Hindu thereafter daily published reports of condolence meetings from all parts of the Presidency.

When Queen Victoria thanked her Indian subjects for their messages of sympathy, The Hindu wrote "The message that Her Majesty has caused to be conveyed to her subjects in all parts of her vast Empire breathes sentiments worthy of her high character and of the love which her subjects bear towards her. Never in ancient or modern times did a greater sovereign adorn an earthly throne and never was the relation between sovereign and subjects more full of love and devotion. To her great domestic and public virtues, benevolent and pious character and to her devotion to duty does she owe the passionate attachment to her of her numerous and diversified subjects. The Indian people can never forget her admonition to Lord Derby who had charge of drafting the Proclamation after the Mutiny. He was asked to bear in mind that it was a female sovereign who spoke to a hundred million of eastern people and that a proclamation issued by her and under the then peculiar circumstances

should breathe feelings of generosity, benevolence and religious toleration. What she was then, 33 years ago, that she is at this moment and indeed the misfortunes that have befallen her since have made her more gentle, more generous and more devoted to duty. Like the true Christian that she is she believes her misfortunes to be the dispensation of benevolent providence whose decrees are inscrutable. It is impossible that such a good woman and a wise ruler can fail to evoke the universal and the most heartfelt sympathy of her subjects at a time of such crushing misfortune as has now befallen her and her family." The Hindu declared a holiday for the paper to mark the funeral of the Duke of Clarence.

Praising the virtues of British rule in 1894 The Hindu wrote "How enormously the Indian people are indebted to British rule for everything that makes human life worth-living, that imparts to it happiness, dignity and the quality of constant progress, will be seen from a comparison of the present condition of India with her condition so recently as 70 years ago. At the present moment as peace and security prevail, as the rulers are committed to an enlightened and progressive Government and to a policy of ruling the people primarily for their direct benefit, we complain of particular policies and measures, we manifest discontent and agitate for the redress of grievances. But what was the condition of India before the supremacy of British power, firmly established, began to bear fruit in the suppression of disorder and lawlessness and of those lingering relics of barbarism, the living offspring of the ruler's and the priest's tyranny? The spirit of discontent that is so annoying to our Anglo-Indian friends is no indication whatsoever of ingratitude or disloyalty, but is on the other hand, as we have more than once pointed out in these columns, the result of our confidence in the wisdom and benevolence of the rulers, a confidence that is fully justified and sustained by the history of British rule during the past 70 years. Britain's rule of India follows no model derived from Mahomedan Governments but by its frank admission of its duties towards the people it has earned its title to their confidence, gratitude and loyalty. And this feeling on the part of the people is only intensified by a knowledge of their country's condition in times previous to the establishment of British supremacy. Unwise as some of its representatives may be and some of its principles and deeds, on the whole Britain's rule of India will remain an undying monument of her greatness and power and the cause of India's eternal attachment and gratitude."

But The Hindu did not fail to highlight the prevalence of discontent in India and in an editorial in 1893 it analysed its causes. "To those that even superficially observe the state of things in India", it wrote, "the prevalence of a deep and general discontent among the people will be apparent. This discontent is the result of two causes, oppressive taxation and the insolence of the ruling classes. There have been useless and wicked wars in which India had not the faintest interest and the poor people of India have been forced to pay for them. Costly palaces have been erected for the sole benefit of the rulers and in the adjustment of taxation the most elementary principles of economy have been violated." The Hindu mentioned the "millions of money that are carried to a distant foreign country, chiefly in the shape of pensions, allowances and remuneration to an army of foreign employees of whom ninety percent are quite unnecessary and might be replaced by the people of the

country. This frightful drain has gone on since the first establishment of British supremacy, but since the abolition of the East India Company it has increased by enormous proportion and has ever been a source of the keenest embarrassment to the rulers. This drain continues to increase and the sore and bent-back of the taxpayer continues to be loaded with further burdens".

The Hindu's complaint all the time was against the administration and its misuse of power.

"No great measure has been launched by the Government within recent years", The Hindu wrote in 1895, "without showing an indication of the distrust of the people. To curb the powers of the judges, to pile up arbitrary enactments to strengthen the hands of the Executive, to reduce steadily the measure of political power already granted to the people — these have been the broad characteristics of the attitude of the rulers towards the ruled. To set class against class, to follow whenever possible, the barbarous policy of "Divide and rule" and to discredit and abuse the educated classes who are the natural leaders of the people have become the most common phenomenon in British Indian administration... The great principle of Government in Western countries that there should be no taxation without representation is not recognised in this country and is even ridiculed by official Anglo-Indians. The opinion of the Indian people, their wishes and their sentiments, receive no weight in the initiation of great measures. The consequence is that during the past 20 years, the revenues of the country have been squandered upon vain and ambitious military enterprises beyond the frontiers of India... The cost of civil administration has increased and that of the army has gone up by leaps and bounds while those branches of the administration which confer direct benefit on the people have been starved. Though taxation has increased enormously the people that bear its burden have received no proportionate benefit... Is it then a wonder that as the result of this vicious system of Government there is deep discontent throughout the country?"

The Hindu had never, in line with the National Congress, wanted by way of political reforms, more than enlarged Legislative Councils in the provinces with a non-official elected majority and the right to put questions to Government. And when in 1892 the councils were enlarged without a majority of elected members but with the right of interpellations, The Hindu was not dissatisfied. Reviewing the work of the enlarged Madras Legislative Council in 1895 The Hindu wrote: "The Council has worked practically for two years with non-official members elected by quasi-popular constituencies; and whatever may be the feelings of the Government and the officials as to the value of the public service done by the council under its present constitution, on the public it has produced a highly satisfactory impression. Overworked officials may welcome the close of the legislative sessions but from the point of view of the public it is a misfortune that the council does not sit throughout the year, for there are always public grievances urgently calling for redress; and however disappointing the answers given may often be, there is no doubt that a very wholesome influence is produced upon the administration generally and upon individual officials by the kind of authorised publicity which well designed interpellations gives official acts and omissions"

The Hindu had something to say about the usefulness of interpellations (although supplementary questions which were the salt and spice of the



question hour in later days were not allowed) in another editorial. It said: "The Government seems to regard it (interpellation) as a contrivance for its annoyance and is disposed to offer the same lively resistance to any exercise of this function that a juvenile offers to the application of the maternal soap and sponge"

The Hindu defined what an interpellation should seek and what it should not. "The object of an interpellation is not and ought not to be, to tease, annoy or discredit the Government or to place oneself in evidence before the public. On the other hand an interpellation may not merely ask for information but may also gain information, complain and suggest reforms and remedies. Its object is to turn a bull's eye on every nook and corner of the administration and seize all cases of real abuse of power or discretion and hand them up to the Government. It is an institution for revealing the internal arrangement of the administration, for turning the administration inside out and for making the interior as clean, polished and respectable as the exterior. It may occasionally happen that its electric light may illuminate the nudity of a high placed official and however unpleasant the process may be to the subject of illumination, its object is not to complain but merely to secure decent clothing for the future"

When the "Father of the Congress", A. O. Hume, visited Madras towards the end of 1893, The Hindu hailed him as "one of the brightest ornaments to the community which owns him" and added: "His disinterested labours have contributed more to endear British rule to educated India than all the acts of many a Governor or Governor-General. Mr. Hume is the great link which connects the two communities together, not in official duty which is after all mere desk work, but in non-official fellowship, and no man has been more misunderstood by his own countrymen than has been Mr. Hume. But time and the progress of events will abundantly testify to the beneficial results that will flow from the self-sacrifices of this distinguished son of Great Britain. Of Englishmen who made it their duty to plead the cause of India she had always the good fortune to possess many. But Mr. Hume stands on a higher pedestal. For more than eight years he has incessantly laboured for the good of this country, for an attainable, tangible end. He has sacrificed his health, the goodwill of his countrymen, his hard earned money, in promoting a cause which is calculated only to raise the Indian people, but never to bring him in return any personal gain or honour except, of course, the reward of all sincere patriots, the consciousness of doing good for its own sake . . . He has won the unbounded confidence of Indians. He has moved so intimately with our countrymen that he knows all their merits and demerits. An untiring and accomplished writer, a nationalist, a trained financier, he combines in him all the advantages which service under the British Crown confers on those who reach the highest rungs of the official ladder. How can this country ever repay the obligations under which Mr. Hume has laid it?"

Describing the popular reception accorded to Mr. Hume at the Madras Central Station when he arrived on December 1, 1893 The Hindu said: "At an early hour the Central Station was crowded with Hindus and Mahomedans, old and young, the large majority of whom for the sake of that loyal and constitutional order which from first to last characterised the proceedings of this vast and enthusiastic gathering, assembled on the departure platform, while a

select deputation awaited the arrival of the Bombay Mail at the spot where the train draws up. Precisely at 8 a.m. Mr. Hume arrived and after shaking hands with the leaders of the local demonstration walked across to the other side of the station, where he was received with ringing cheers and in a suitable place cleared for his better accommodation was presented with the "respectful address of the Hume Reception Committee"

Writing on the reception *The Hindu* said it recalled the one given to Lord Ripon. "He is certainly the first Englishman", "*The Hindu* said, "who without power, office or authority has by mere disinterested devotion and friendly service earned an undying fame in the history of Indian regeneration"

A public reception was given to Hume at the Victoria Public hall in Madras which *The Hindu* said was attended by five to six thousand people including a good proportion of students. M. Veeraraghavachariar, joint Proprietor of *The Hindu*, read and presented the address of welcome. Besides Hume, Eardley Norton and Morgan Browne also spoke at the meeting and *The Hindu* said "It would be hard to decide who spoke best and most acceptably for each in turn was accorded a most enthusiastic reception. Never before in Madras have we heard such hearty and sustained approval, an approval manifested not merely by brazen-throated demonstration but by running remarks in English of keen intelligence and appreciation from every quarter of the huge crowd of listeners conclusively showing that the great majority, if not all, of them were educated men. To what was this attributable? Explain it otherwise who will, we for our part cannot help ascribing a phenomenon of such singular political significance to the inherent goodness of the Congress cause and sterling character of its central figure. The cause is the cause of freedom and he who in that long and hard battle, has just won his first great victory is the Garibaldi of officially enslaved India. No less a cause and no less a man could have secured such a triumph as the enlargement of the legislative councils of the country on the present basis. Those who hate as much as we welcome the reform, on account of the principle involved in the reform, hate it as we welcome it chiefly because they, with us, to the full understand that it is in the nature of reform neither to go back nor to stand still but to advance. They believe and tremble.

From such clear intelligence of the dread consequences to them came the solid Civil Service resistance to the concession Mr. Hume has so painfully wrung from a bureaucracy that whenever the interests of the ruled conflict with those of the ruler, forthwith becomes dim of sight and hard of hearing. On the detracting hypothesis is of those who hate us save for what they can get out of us, the phenomenon is insoluble. In the future this consideration ought to provide them with what their Western cousins call 'much meaty food for reflection'."

Hume proceeded on a tour of the Tamil country and the Kumbakonam Correspondent sent the following report of the welcome given to him in that intellectual centre

"Mr. Hume arrived here (the report said) last evening (December 4, 1893) and was received by almost all the leading citizens on the platform which was full with a band and blue lights. There was a procession of over 50 carriages from the station to the Traveller's Bungalow, the road en route being decorated with festoons and illumined. There was a grand meeting this morning at the Port Town Hall which was exquisitely decorated with a big pandal and there were

motatoes of welcome on the road in front After the presentation of an address, Mr Hume delivered a stirring speech amidst repeated cheering Great enthusiasm prevailed"

The Cuddalore Correspondent reported "Mr Hume who was a passenger by the morning mail train on Monday was met at the station by Mr Ramanujachariar, and some other local lawyers Mr. Ramanujachariar had previous intimation from a friend in Madras of Mr Hume's movements and was also desired to have some vegetable preparations for his breakfast Mr Hume thanked Mr Ramanujachariar for providing the breakfast but regretted he could not enjoy the meal as the curry was hot He is apparently not a friend of chillies and pepper".

When Mr Hume left the shores of India in March, 1894, after his arduous labours, The Hindu bid him a fond and affectionate farewell "The secret of Mr. Hume's success in his efforts in India", it said, "lies mainly in the genuine love he feels for the country and the generous and sympathetic eye with which he has studied Indian problems There is no other Englishman now living in whom the people have greater confidence and for whom they have a higher regard than the one who will be known for all ages as the founder and father of the Indian National Congress Mr Hume's achievement might well be termed a mighty conquest, he conquered the hearts of hundreds and thousands of Indians Sages of old have laid it down that the extinction of likes and dislikes would enable a man to win glorious victories And Mr Hume long ago got over the prejudice against his dark coloured brethren in India and he was in possession of that talisman, sympathy, which is the only true binding force between the diverse nations of the world"

Hume often came into conflict with British officials in India in the course of his work for the Congress One such incident he reported to The Hindu in a letter early in 1892 He said that sometime ago he had revealed in a Bombay paper that the Bombay Government had issued a confidential circular prohibiting Government lawyers and prosecutors from attending the Congress session as delegates The Bombay Government, he added, promptly replied saying the report was "untrue and entirely without foundation" Hume wrote to the Governor, Lord Harris, personally repeating the charge and the latter "declined but very courteously, to plead guilty to the impeachment and challenged me to send him a copy of the circular" Hume told The Hindu he managed to send a copy of the circular to the Governor and asked him to withdraw the Government's denial The Governor replied in effect "though very politely that he would see me blowed first" Hume then took up the matter with the Viceroy "but he naturally did not see his way to interfere". And Hume enclosed the entire correspondence and the offending circular for publication by the Editor which The Hindu carried in full

There was another Englishman whom The Hindu included in the galaxy of noble friends and valiant fighters of the English race and his name was Sir William Wedderburn who presided over the fifth session of the Congress in Bombay in December, 1889 "Sir William Wedderburn", it said, "has now won an everlasting place in the hearts and affections of the people of the Indian empire When the bitterness of the hour passes away, the historian of the future will include him among the Englishmen that disinterestedly laboured hard to introduce such improvements as would make Indians accept British

rule as the national Government of the Indian people and to ensure its eternal permanence by consolidating it on the basis of righteousness, equality, mutual trust and goodwill"

A special reporter who covered the Bombay session of the Congress in 1889 sounded a warning about its hugeness. "The fifth Congress", he said, "has confirmed the impression which has been gaining ground for some time that the organisation of the Congress must be brought under stricter control than is possible to exercise at present. The number of delegates has swollen to nearly 3000 of whom there were at least 300 Mahomedan gentlemen representing that important community. The Madras Presidency contributed a contingent of nearly 400 men of intelligence and social position and other provinces brought up each its own contingent, Bombay, of course, putting forth the largest number. Bombay must be spending money like brick pieces to accommodate so large a number in a place where everything is dear and houses or space cannot be had for any quantity of money. The exertions of the Bombay gentlemen should have been pushed almost to the point of collapse to manage a concern so huge as the Congress has now grown to be"

"The difficulty of obtaining the required number of intelligent men who would be in constant attendance upon the guests, of anticipating their wants and requirements and supplying them when they are communicated, may easily be imagined. And some of these gentlemen may also be more considerate to the employees of the Reception Committee and more generous in criticising the faults of the arrangements of the Committee. I fear the delegates from Southern India are giving the Committee the most trouble. A large number of these delegates are Vaishnavas and they will not take anything prepared by Vaishnava cooks and servants engaged by the Committee. Each would insist upon having a separate kitchen for himself and his coffee and meals prepared by his own cook. Even if the whole vacant space of Bombay were at the disposal of the Reception Committee it would be impossible satisfactorily to meet such unreasonable demand. Some would criticise the demeanour of the servants of the committee, some would complain that their requirements are not supplied with sufficient promptitude and some would impeach the Madras Secretaries of the Congress that they are not informed then and there of what takes place or is to take place in Mr. Hume's or Mr. Bradlaugh's residence. The Madras delegates, especially those from the districts, are full of discontent, so much so that at a meeting of these delegates on Wednesday night they formally passed a vote of censure on Mr. M. Veeraghavachariar for among other faults, the fault of certain delegates seeing Mr. Bradlaugh (British Member of Parliament and friend of India who attended the Congress session) without their knowledge. But the cause of the keenest discontent among the delegates was the issuing of tickets for visitors".

The impact of Congress propaganda both in India and in Britain was noted by the London Correspondent in his fortnightly letter to *The Hindu* in 1890. He wrote: "Already the agitation consequent upon the visit of the Congress delegation to England has begun to bear fruit and good fruit too. Only four days have elapsed since the first meeting of the campaign was held. Yet probably because the reports in *The Times*, the *Daily News*, *Daily Graphic*, the *Standard*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and other papers were so fair and some times sympathetic that already the opposition Press is writing in an unwonted strain. Its

attitude has hitherto been that of the *Pioneer* with a touch of Mr Kemp of the *Bengal Times* added. Now it takes a quite different line. Last night the second leading article of the Press was devoted to Indian problems. The agitation is actually welcomed! Of course, the article is not in favour of the Congress movement. Indeed if anything it is even more contemptuous of the reformers and more hostile than usual to the reformers' ideals. But the question is discussed. Reasons are given why in the opinion of the paper the demands of the Congress should not be granted. The language here and there is reasonable. The customary abuse of the Bengali Babu is absent; its absence strikes me with a sense of surprise. You of *The Hindu* will by no means agree with the arguments put forward. But with me, I am sure, you will welcome the fact that your great movement is being dealt with in a reasoning and reasonable spirit".

The Madras delegates to the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1890 travelled by the ship Java and a report of what happened on board the ship was given by a special Correspondent of *The Hindu*.

"The delegates gave a dinner to Captain Rickford and the officers of the Java for their kindness and courtesy. Dewan Bahadur Raghunth Row proposed the Queen's toast and Rao Bahadur P. Anandachari the captain's. The Correspondent described the ship and its comforts and also the enforced absence of caste restrictions among passengers. Referring to this *The Hindu* wrote "This time as many as 30 or more Brahmins went to Calcutta by steamer and as it took five days to reach Calcutta, the Brahmin delegates, at any rate many of them, must have used the water and other provisions supplied by the outcaste servants of the steamer. They not only seem to have made no scruple to use them but actually went in for a pucca English way of demonstrating their gratitude for the hospitality of the officers and men of the steamer. Who will not see a sign of the times in this circumstance?"

When Lord Elgin, the Viceroy, visited Madras in December, 1895, he was involved in an incident with the Madras Mahajana Sabha.

*The Hindu* had a few weeks earlier protested against the "pomp and show" being arranged in connection with the Viceroy's visit. "What the people require", it said, "is more food, more schools, more drains and a larger supply of water, more unreserved forests, salt for a less high price, less of stamp duty, a quieter settlement of disputes, a less disgraceful management of temples. If the Viceroy can assist them in any of these directions they will themselves arrange for a show in His Excellency's behalf. If not, let not insult be added to injury and let no senseless pageantry mark Lord Elgin's tour. Hyderabad will spend lakhs and Mysore thousands and the people in British India may be satisfied with the waste in native states".

In connection with Lord Elgin's visit to Madras, the Mahajana Sabha had decided to present an address to him and as usual an advance copy was sent to him. The Sabha received a communication asking it to drop three paragraphs from the address which related to its request to reduce military expenditure and other important public issues, as the Viceroy had already announced in Poona that he would not accept public addresses which raised public issues. *The Hindu* strongly criticised the Viceroy's action and the Mahajana Sabha itself withdrew its address and decided not to present one.

*The Hindu* published press criticism of the Viceroy all over the country and also an editorial in the *Madras Mail* which flew into violent rage against the

Mahajana Sabha The Madras Mail wrote "The Mahajana Sabha probably wants to reduce Her Majesty's representative in India to the low level of the President of the U. S. A. But we will not let that be done We are loyal to the marrow of our bones. And apparently in supreme ignorance of this fact the Secretary of the shameless Sabha has sent us a copy of the correspondence between the Government of Madras and the Sabha relating to their precious address And for what? Why "for favour of publication" as the presumptuous prig would put it. Favour of publication, forsooth! Oh! disloyal curs of the Madras Mahajana Sabha! Favour you shall have none at our hands If it be favour you want, go, seek it at the hands of the seditious *Hindu* and the firebrand *Standard*. You decline to present your address to the Viceroy without the three obnoxious paragraphs, do you? It is like the pygmies defying the giants. Does the disreputable Sabha opine that by this disloyal deed of theirs the solar system would dissolve itself back into chaos? No! let them rest assured that the world will not come to an end and that despite anything they may do the celestial orbs will continue to spin and revolve round in their appointed courses All that the Sabha has succeeded in doing is to cut its nose to spite its face".

When the grand old man of Indian Nationalism, Dadhabhai Naoroji was defeated in the general elections to the Parliament in Britain in 1895 he sent a message to The Hindu urging the people of India not to be disheartened at his reverse

"The only policy upon which I have acted through life", he said, "the policy of 'go on', with patience and perseverance whether successful or unsuccessful in any good cause, is the one upon which I shall act now as ever before. As long as I have the health and opportunity of serving my country, I shall continue to do so This is the last work of my life and I intend to go on with it. I mean therefore to try to get into the House of Commons again as it is there that the battles of the grievances and necessary reforms of India and the stability of the British Empire have to be fought. The good of India is the good of the British Empire. The Indian question is of far wider importance than merely the interests of India It is the question of the very existence, stability and continuance of the British Empire". Dadabhai Naoroji added: "Vast and powerful forces are working and growing in India. If the statesmen of the day do not direct them to the promotion of the interests of the Empire, producing satisfaction and prosperity among the people, they cannot and should not expect that those forces will not go against British rule and end in some disaster. My humble efforts have always been and will continue to be directed to avert this calamity as far as an individual's efforts can go My countrymen in India need not in any way be discouraged by my defeat. The interest in Indian affairs has been gradually but surely (though slowly) increasing among the British people and I shall always cherish the hope that the British people will some time see that their true interest consists in promoting the interests, contentment and prosperity of India and not in persisting in the unnatural present policy which is gradually leading to the discontentment and continuous poverty of India".

The Hindu while very much involved in the politics of British India did not ignore the affairs of Indian states. It kept a watchful but sympathetic eye on the administration in the states, more especially the southern states like Mysore, Travancore, Cochin and Hyderabad and gave praise where praise was

due and criticised when criticism was necessary. A matter of satisfaction for it was that these states had at the helm of affairs Indian administrators who by their wisdom and foresight helped to improve the condition of the states' subjects. The Hindu however did not hide its feelings about some of the Princes who tended to be autocratic and indifferent to their duty to their subjects. Here is a pen picture of the Princes by The Hindu written in 1887

"In many respects", The Hindu wrote, "they (the Princes) are inferior to their ancestors, If their ancestors had certain of the vices of oriental rulers they had definite and high notions of their duty, they had keen political instincts which they inherited from their ancestors, were manly and independent and extorted the admiration of all who came in contact with them. They had unlimited power but they knew how to use it for their own good and for the good of their subjects. The native rulers of the modern type are generally incompetent men and while they retain many of the vices of their forefathers they have few of their virtues. They have been spoiled by a worthless education which is neither western nor oriental and while as unwilling as all rulers are to part with power they generally degrade themselves into tools of their favourites, clever Ministers or intriguing politicals. They have learnt certain English ideas, they are generally experts in English sports and they make themselves popular in English society. But they care little for the opinion of their countrymen, they have few ideas of their own and are educated by no feeling of patriotism. The education they receive in Rajkumar Colleges or from private English tutors has done them no practical good".

The Hindu wrote again in 1888: "So long as they (the Princes) are left to themselves, to the influence of their spontaneous impulses, they will not undertake to reduce their own powers and privileges and willingly share them with others. They must be compelled to do so by the Government of India in the interests of the millions who are subject to their irresponsible rule, but for whose well being the Government of India are ultimately answerable. It is the privilege of all despotically governed people to rebel against despotic rulers when their despotism grows intolerable and this privilege has been availed of freely in the past in India as well as in other countries in the world. The despotic ruler is aware of this limit and he exercises his despotism subject to this risk. But the mighty arms of Britain have rendered impossible to the people of the native states this protection against the excesses of despotism. Their only business is to obey and to pay and while they have no manner of redress against the caprice and tyranny of their rulers, they have not the blessings that a benevolent and enlightened despotism such as that of the Government of India has conferred upon the people. There is therefore a serious responsibility resting on the Government of India who must no longer neglect their double duty to protect the native rulers from the insolence of their own agents and to redeem the subjects of these rulers from the depth of ignorance and servitude in which they are now sunk".

As far back as 1887, a reader writing to The Hindu urged that the National Congress should have "its salutary influence on the administration of native states". He said the National Congress had hitherto been a purely political gathering and "even from the political aspect the success or otherwise of the administration of the native states is a matter of very serious importance to India as a whole. It is in the native state that the capacity of Indians to govern

themselves is really being tried". The reader added. "Politically British India has to watch and guide the native states, but socially owing to the peculiar advantage of their position they can afford to be themselves the leaders. And why are they not?"

The Hindu in February, 1896, published an article by a native Prince who called himself "A territorial Maharaja" and the heading of the article was "The sovereign Princes of India and their relation to the "Empire" "The time has already arrived", he wrote, "for allowing the enlightened native Princes of India to play an active part in the Imperial Council of Her Majesty into which a few of them had the honour of being initiated as Her Majesty's councillors on the occasion of the Imperial Declaration at Delhi. It may so happen that some of the native Princes may not all at once like to take part in the Imperial Union on the ground that their prestige as sovereign Princes will become a thing of common place. But steps might be taken to have their prestige and power kept sacred and respected if not enhanced and exalted. It is further our opinion that such a step will in the long run bring the Princes and the people of India into closer touch with the British sovereign power and will certainly result in multiplying the welfare and contentment of the people of India by bringing into united action the dormant powers of the sovereign Princes of the soil, now confined within the narrow limits of their territories, to bear upon the empire for their commonweal"

The Hindu in 1887 devoted a special article to Sir Salar Jung of Hyderabad whom it described as "a spoilt child of fortune" It criticised his authoritarian tendencies and dwelt at length on the species of aristocracy which he represented and which the British feared and liquidated.

The Hindu wrote: "That Sir Salar Jung should entertain doubts as to the ultimate utility of the European system of Government is what may be expected. His social position, his training and his experience are not such as to predispose him towards democracy. As a representative of Indian aristocracy he has inherited a prejudice in favour of that worst species of czarism, the military despotism of the East of which the class represented by Sir Salar Jung is the direct product. From the most ancient times India has had no hereditary and privileged class of aristocracy. The Hindu aristocracy, like the aristocracy of other ancient countries, was the class of priests to whom alone belonged the prerogative of advising kings and remonstrating with them when they went wrong. The advent of the Mahomedans and the confusion they caused in the government of the country gave rise to a class of adventurers who by virtue of their ability or by the favouritism of the rulers raised themselves to the highest power in the state. But the fortunes of this class were constantly changing and the man that was the chief favourite of the King today and who enjoyed unlimited privileges and the highest honours, was hurtled down the next day and was consigned to obscurity and disgrace. They created revolutions and deposed kings, but self-aggrandisement was their only motive. The welfare of the masses never entered into their schemes and adventures nor did they try to uphold and extend the rights and privileges of their own class. The people of India owe to them nothing that they can look back upon with pleasure. They plundered and oppressed the people and generally made themselves the instruments of the worst excesses of oriental despotism. But the days of their ascendancy were numbered when Britain established her supremacy in this



country The new rulers dreaded their influence and their policy was to extinguish this class of aristocracy altogether if possible. They did not want to nourish a class of men who in other countries constituted the class of senators and diplomatists, but who in a newly conquered country might prove centres of intrigue and danger in times of difficulty. These were not the men the English wanted in India and these responsible and honourable offices they reserved for their own countrymen. But what they wanted was a larger class of peasants and labourers who would work hard and contribute liberally to their revenues. The aristocracy therefore did not fare well with the earlier representatives of Anglo-Indian statesmanship. They were despised and neglected and the little influence they possessed in times of anarchy they lost when peace and order were restored and when education and moral fitness rather than hereditary social position became the chief recommendation to offices of the state. The Indian aristocracy therefore feels the position to be anomalous and is naturally inclined to make the most of the words of hope and flattery addressed to it by those who love it less than they hate the educated natives. These latter class consistently with their education labour in the direction of reform and progress whereas the class represented by Sir Salar Jung clings to existing arrangements and makes the best of an unfortunate and anomalous position. The ideal of the educated section of the native community is democracy whereas the landed and titled nobility dread its approach and passionately plead for a regime of privilege and arbitrary power. This tendency in modern India is nowhere more marked than in the native state of Hyderabad. It is still the stronghold where linger the worst forces that led the last phase of Moghul degeneracy to utter extinction. Sir Salar Jung had the office of Prime Minister thrust upon him and enjoyed a lease of that exalted and respectable position for about four years during which period had he been a man of real talent, had he possessed a fraction of the ability which distinguished his father, he would have made a permanent impression on the Government of that state, but he utterly disappointed his friends and brought discredit upon himself and ruin to the state".

The Hindu did not make much of the Nizam's apparent sympathy with Sir Syed Ammad, the "Sage of Aligarh", as it called him, who was espousing the cause of Muslims to the British and drifted away from the nationalist movement. The Hindu wrote: "We said on a former occasion that the Nizam's apparent sympathy with Sir Syed's "Patriotic Association" must not be given too much importance. The Nizam is an innocent young man and his minister who does not know English, knows probably as much about the Congress as the Raja of Bhinga knows about democracy. The offer of Rs. 4,000 is the work of Nawab Intezar Jung, who is a protege of the Aligarh Sage and who was a very low official in the Postal Department of the North-West Provinces. And all the opposition to the Congress in Hyderabad is due to this person and to one or two who are similarly personally indebted to Sir Syed".

**T**HE YEAR 1897 was the year of the great famine in India. Relief works were opened by the Government but they were not popular everywhere as could be seen from this report in *The Hindu* from its Poona Correspondent on January 15, 1897. "The Government has been prompt enough", he wrote, "to open relief works, but all the works consist of breaking stones — Oh! they call it metal in idiomatic English! The men are unaccustomed to the work and to some starvation is preferable to the scanty allowance on these degrading works. The artisans are in great distress everywhere, weavers especially".

The *Hindu* estimated that as many as 150,000 had perished in the Central Provinces from famine. "How far this figure is to be relied on we cannot say but we believe that large numbers have died of starvation in those provinces and elsewhere because they will not avail themselves of relief by working to obtain it. No doubt a false sense of dignity may conceivably beat the bottom of it; but it must be remembered that this country has been for ages the paradise of idle beggary and special provision must be made to save the lives of even sturdy men who will not work. It is a consolation to know that the numbers of such as these are always small and when the prosperity of the season returns the community will be able to make provision for them. But over and above these classes, there are sure to be large numbers of people who will have to suffer the pangs of hunger if not of starvation, owing to the high prices that always rule in the season of famine. Their lot is one of silent suffering and often of death by a lingering inch by inch torture and many a sensitive plant is stifled to death in this country by the slow torture of self-imposed starvation. Their woes and wrongs can only be healed by the operation of philanthropy whatever be the source from which it may emanate".

The *Hindu* in another leading article stressed that the famine relief works now undertaken and planned for the future "should be mainly intended to provide against and prevent the occurrence of future famines. It is calculated from the experience of the past few years that some kind of famine occurs once in at least every ten years and some times even at shorter intervals and in a century there occur three or even more great famines. It is necessary to press upon the attention of our rulers what we consider to be effective measures for the prevention of famine. The one thing upon which the ruling class in India seems to have set its heart is the extension of railways. We are well aware of

the advantages of railways in famine times but we think that any further extension of railways beyond those now in progress of construction or under survey, is not imperatively needed and may even prove to some extent injurious. Some one made a very wise and very shrewd observation when he said that when there was not enough food in the country to feed the people there would be little good in providing railways to carry food from one part of the country to another."

The Hindu contended that because of the clearing of forests for laying railway lines and the cutting down of trees to provide fuel for the railways, the rain supply of Travancore and other parts of the West Coast had been considerably affected and this had reduced the prosperity of the people of the area. "And we fear if the process of denudation continues as in the past, the beauty of that far-famed country will largely be a thing of the past. Similar evils have occurred elsewhere owing to the pushing forward of a vigorous railway policy. It behoves Government to endeavour to restore to the land its former wealth of forests in order that the rainfall may be larger and more evenly distributed than now."

The Hindu also emphasised the need to divert the attention of at least a portion of the people to other forms of industry than agriculture. It pointed out India was at the mercy of European countries for her manufactured products. "If at least our existing resources are developed and especially if Government can see their way to grant some protection to our industry, our condition is capable of some improvement. In this connection we unhesitatingly declare our conviction that India is sacrificed in order to further the interests of English manufacturers. Until the British Government do something for the resuscitation of Indian manufacturers, the guilt of mis-government and the responsibilities of aggravating famine and distress will lie to an appreciable extent on their heads and shoulders".

The feeling of frustration and helplessness revealed in the earlier editorials exploded into an indictment of the British administration in India when The Hindu wrote on January 26, 1897: "The people of India have for 12 years met in the National Congress and pronounced their emphatic condemnation of the methods of government now in vogue in this country. So far they have only pointed out the reforms that are needed. But the time will, we fear, soon come when the representatives of the Indian people assembled in Congress will have to propose radical changes in the very constitution of the Government of India. We fear that so long as that Government is alien in its composition and methods the evils from which we are suffering will continue until they assume so aggravated a form as to rouse the attention of the entire world. Mr. Dadhabhai Naoroji cried himself hoarse over these evils for a whole lifetime. Government has turned a deaf ear to his remonstrances and representations. But he has lived to see the foreshadowings of the doom that he saw dimly in the distant future to await the present system of Indian Government. What a vast and interminable array of taxes? What an equally vast and interminable array of highly paid officials? How utterly irresponsible is the system and how entirely opposed to all our accustomed and traditional methods? How utterly unsuited to the wants and habits of the people? We again declare that all this humiliation and suffering is the result of the most

culpable, guilty, incapable and selfish maladministration. The whole system requires overhauling and nothing less than a Royal Commission is wanted to mend it or end it."

And the opportunity came to the Editor of *The Hindu* to present his case before such a Royal Commission when G. Subramania Aiyer was invited to London on March, 19, 1897, to give evidence before the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure presided over by Lord Welby. Dadhabhai Naoroji, one of the members of the Commission, had written to Veeraraghavachariar, joint Proprietor of *The Hindu*, that the Editor of *The Hindu* should be sent to England to give evidence before the Commission and he should come armed with full facts regarding Government expenditure in India. Accordingly the Madras Mahajana Sabha elected Subramania Aiyer as its representative to give evidence before the Commission which was later notified of this decision. The Commission while inviting Subramania Aiyer to London asked him to send a resume of his submissions to the Commission in advance and this was done.

*The People's Friend* of Madras welcomed Subramania Aiyer's trip to England. "It affords us no little pleasure to learn", it wrote, "that our brother, Mr. G. Subramania Aiyer, of *The Hindu* has been selected by the Mahajana Sabha to give evidence before Lord Welby's Commission on Indian Expenditure as its own and the people's representative from this part of the country. Mr. Subramania Aiyer, though a young man is very studious and conscientious and thoroughly masters all its details before he ventures to speak or write upon any subject and he has moreover the courage of his convictions as all Southern India knows. He is by no means an impracticable man and does not allow his patriotic zeal to run away either with his discretion or commonsense. So his journey to England on this public duty will, we are sure, prove beneficial to one and all in many ways."

Subramania Aiyer sailed for England from Bombay on April 10, 1897. In a private letter to a Madras friend from his ship on the way to England Subramania Aiyer described an incident in the Mediterranean near the island of Crete when the Italian gunboat stopped his ship mistaking it for a Greek vessel carrying troops for the island. "Immediately our flag was hoisted to show that we were a friendly nation and we were allowed to proceed in peace. Otherwise it would have been nice fun to be fired at and to see what I have never seen and do not hope to see all my life — a battle on the sea. We are still sailing along the southern coast of Crete which is protected by a continuous range of hills which covered by clouds and crowned by a thin layer of snow, presented a charming sight, a sight which people in Madras can hardly have an idea of."

To Subramania Aiyer London appeared to be a huge city, many times bigger than Bombay. In a letter on April 23, 1897, he wrote. "Living here is very costly — I mean more costly than I was led to believe by friends. I don't know whether I shall stay here for the (Diamond) Jubilee (of the Queen's reign). People pay enormous sums for a window overlooking the street through which the procession will pass on the jubilee day. Whole houses, not to speak of rooms or windows, are being taken up for thousands of pounds. I don't know if I will have a chance of seeing anything on that day and if I cannot what is the good of my staying here? If the India Office agrees to the reception of the Madras address to Her Majesty from a deputation and if I be one of the

deputation then of course it would be worthwhile staying here. On enquiry at the India Office, I understand that nothing about our public meeting is known there. My evidence (before the Royal Commission) is likely to be taken in the first week of May after which I shall have time to go about and do some work. The cold is intense and requires a good deal of warm clothing to make you comfortable. As I wrote this letter (it is about 9 in the morning) I feel quite benumbed in my fingers. So far my health has been very good and I believe I can manage to be healthy throughout the period of my absence".

Subramania Aiyer gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure twice, the second one being on May 21, 1897. In his evidence he said, among other things, that the benefits of railways were a great deal exaggerated and that the peculiar economic conditions of India rendered a less rapid progress the wise policy. His first objection was the drain on India's resources by the heavy borrowing for construction of railways and the payment annually of heavy interest which was bleeding India to exhaustion. Secondly, his argument was where railways penetrated in India it carried destruction to the indigenous industry which had given means of sustenance to the people and to which they had become accustomed during the centuries. In no instance had the destructive effect of railways been proved to produce lamentable results than in the weaving industry. A very large proportion of the population had always lived upon the weaving trade but this had now become well nigh extinct, thanks to the invasion of English textiles. Subramania Aiyer said "Every machine-made article imported from Europe and carried into the Indian village with the help of railways, drives a nail in the coffin of native industry and in this manner the railways have to answer for a good deal of the poverty which makes the lot of the Indian poor so miserable". Subramania Aiyer did not want the stopping of all further railway construction. He recognised the material and moral good that the railways did and the fact of their being indispensable in the carrying on of the government of modern days. He only pleaded for a more moderate progress which would not require large amounts being borrowed in foreign markets from year to year. It should be recalled here that much the same view on railways in India was expressed by Romesh Chander Dutt who said they were a great drain on the country's resources which a suffering and starving country could ill afford.

The Hindu reviewing the evidence given by Subramania Aiyer and three other Indians (who included G. K. Gokhale) before the Welby Commission said: "We are glad to hear from friends in London that the four Indian witnesses have acquitted themselves exceedingly well and turned to good account the unique opportunity that was given to them to represent the Indian view of the financial administration of India".

Subramania Aiyer sent a dispatch to his paper on his visit to Windsor, the Queen's suburban residence. He noted that his white turban or cap attracted people around him. "English people are so mindful of dress that the curiosity aroused in the observers everywhere, more especially in women, by my turban or cap is most wonderful. In our country I don't think a difference in one item of dress would rouse so much rude staring, howling and talk as my headdress invariably did in the streets of London".

Among the places he visited was Cambridge where he found only one student from Madras, the other Indians being from the north. Subramania

Aiyer addressed a number of meetings on India and at Hackney, after he had spoken, a working man rose and spoke of India's poverty in a most intelligent and emphatic manner. He said he had been a soldier in Burma and knew how miserable the condition of the people was. It was indeed so miserable that when he told his neighbours in England that the wages on which an Indian working man lived did not exceed three or four pence a day they would not believe him. He denounced the officials in India and the richer classes in England. He told the meeting that their fellow subjects in India had as much right to just and liberal Government as they in England had and it was the duty of the English electors to insist on their representatives in Parliament to do their duty in regard to India.

Subramania Aiyer described his thoughts as he watched the Diamond Jubilee procession in London in a letter to *The Hindu* on July 14, 1897. "No thoughtful man who said the (Jubilee) procession", he wrote, "could have failed to be struck with the significance of the display. England is certainly the greatest country that ancient or modern history has seen. It represents at this day a political organisation, based chiefly, no doubt, on the material power but not without moral forces tempering its sway and extending to the farthest corners of the world, of which there is no parallel in ancient or modern history. The 300 million of the Indian people who have in common with the Imperial power nothing of religion or history but only the bond of political relationship and who look back with pride on their ancient history when they were the cradle of the world's civilisation and with pain and regret at the slow but sure extinction of their social system which in the past defied so many destructive causes, are also within its huge arms. India is the dependency of England and therefore she pays her an enormous tribute in money and acknowledges a political and even a social status inferior to the ruling race, but if she were also bound to the colonies by the same baneful obligations then her position would be intolerable indeed. It was this moral responsibility of England arising from her limitless material power that impressed me most when I beheld on the morning of June 22 that imposing procession of unsurpassed splendour... The Indian people have never hesitated to acknowledge their debt to England for her having redeemed them from a condition of perpetual disorder and tyranny and for her having given them those indispensable conditions of progress, civil order, tolerance, justice and freedom. Some prominent Indians who distinguished themselves in the civil duties of their country could have been fittingly put in the procession and they would have symbolised England's work in the advancement of backward communities. I confess a feeling came over me from my consciousness that I could not share exactly in the feelings of my neighbours, as representing politically a dependant race whose history for centuries together records no single instance even distantly approaching this in its significance as the consummation of the nation's expanding growth. Still our people once saw better days, perhaps the great Emperors of ancient India such as Asoka and Chandragupta when they performed the imperial sacrificial ceremonies inspired the people with the same feeling that Empress Victoria inspired when she drove along the streets amidst such magnificent display on Tuesday last".

Among the people Subramania Aiyer met in London was Sir William Hunter who described *The Hindu* as "undoubtedly the best Indian newspaper,

conspicuous by its ability, moderation and impartiality". Sir William referring to the demands of the Congress, said he thought two circumstances went to make the cause unpopular in England "Firstly, your throwing your lot entirely with the radicals and treating the Conservatives as if they were opposed to the aspirations of the Indian people, and secondly, the violent language by some of our mutual friends, who while trying to do good to the Indian people do them harm by alienating the sympathy of influential politicians, who are by disposition and conviction friendly to India". Sir William said the Congress people did wrong by indulging in an exaggerated language of loyalty to the sovereign while denouncing in unmeasured terms the Government which represented her authority in the land. He said that it was not the radicals that were the best friends of India but that every great landmark in the political progress of India since the establishment of British rule was due to the great measures introduced by Conservative politicians. "I need not say", Subramania Aiyer said in his letter describing the interview, "that I pleaded justification for the course which the Congress has adopted and that if the Congress ceased to look upon the Conservatives as friends of India it is entirely the fault of those people who have turned a deaf ear to our repeated appeals for sympathy and co-operation and have not hesitated to brand the Congress as a disloyal body".

Subramania Aiyer also met Lord Wenlock, a former Governor of Madras and this is what he wrote about him

"Lord Wenlock and myself walked together for about a furlong till we came to a corner when pointing me to a cab to take me to Lord Connemara's house, he himself took another cab towards his own destination. Dressed like an ordinary person with a cane in his hand, I do not know how his late Excellency of Madras felt while elbowing his way through the crowd by the side of a black man, but I felt how these people who surround themselves, while in our country with peculiar ceremonies of official dignity and exclusiveness and who are so inaccessible to people, sink in the crowd and attract no more notice and force no more homage than an ordinary man walking in the street".

Subramania Aiyer, who was made a member of the Royal Asiatic Society during his visit to London, returned to Bombay on July 19, 1897, and he was given an enthusiastic reception by the Bombay Presidency Association. He arrived back in Madras on July 21 and this was how *The Hindu* reported it "Since the hour of the arrival of the Bombay train being too early for the people to assemble at the station, it was arranged that he should arrive by the South-West Main train which he accordingly did, spending the interval at Perambur. Alighting from the carriage amidst loud applause, Mr. Subramania Aiyer was overwhelmed with the congratulations and good wishes of the gentlemen who were assembled to receive him and who loaded him with garlands and bouquets and other tokens of welcome".

Within a week of Subramania Aiyer resuming his editorial chair came the news of the arrest of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Poona on a charge of creating disaffection against the Government through his writings in his journal, *Kesari*. *The Hindu*, which lifted the news from the *Advocate of India* of Bombay, featured it in big type and also of the large scale arrests of leading citizens of Poona and their deportation. The paper criticised the "reign of terror" let loose by the Government following the murder of a British soldier and a British official, Mr. Rand, in Poona.

The background to the murder and the Government's repressive policy were the anti-plague operations conducted with the aid of British soldiers in the course of which they were alleged to have violated the sentiments of the people and treated them, especially the womenfolk, harshly

Commenting on the Poona developments, *The Hindu* wrote: "We have not yet known the maximum number of arrests that the Bombay Government have intended to make. They are evidently going in a foolhardy fashion utterly regardless of the political effect of their acts. The most prominent citizens of Poona are being arrested one after another, some under the Penal Code, some under one old unheard of regulation which few suspected was in force in these days of enlightened Government. The Bombay Government must have been reduced to the utmost straits when they considered it necessary to fall back upon a barbarous regulation, antiquated and unsuited to these days of peace and enlightenment. . . It is clear that there is no sort of evidence to implicate these men in any crime either against individuals or against the state and we take their arrest under the circumstances as mainly due to their prominent position in society. The Bombay Government want to make an example of some persons whose arrest and ruin would strike terror in the minds of the Poona people. . . In Poona we have a people highly intelligent and cultured with right notions of citizenship and government; and it is a most remarkable thing that the people who have been regarded under blind prejudice as capable of treason and murder were the very people who quietly endured the calamities of the plague and the still greater calamities of oppression and insults at the hands of soldiers. They endured these and they also endured the calumnies uttered against them by the Anglo-Indian Press and by the District Magistrate of Poona in the most reckless fashion. Among any other people the anti-plague operations by soldiers would have been attended with disturbances. The inhabitants of Poona submitted themselves to the operations with resignation which is surprising under the circumstances. And it is these very people that are now being prosecuted and whose leaders are being humiliated and oppressed. That a murder was committed on the Jubilee night is perfectly true, but not a single incident has hitherto been unravelled pointing to any clue to the dark deed. Acts like these make us realise the grave possibilities to which Her Majesty's subjects are liable and will make us stoutly resist any extension of executive authority. The precedent of the Bombay Government unmistakably shows that the Executive, if it has the power, will not hesitate to subject Indian subjects of the Queen Empress to the utmost arbitrary and tyrannical treatment. This awful possibility the people have now learnt that they must guard themselves against".

The *Madras Mail* was incensed against the attacks on the Bombay Government by *The Hindu* and said this was not expected of an Editor who had been invited to give evidence before the Royal Commission on Expenditure. *The Hindu* replied: "The Indian Press would not do its duty if it fails to write strongly and with indignation on the mad doings of the Bombay Government and so long as it has the freedom which the law gives it, it would write frankly and freely and would recognise no vocation in a constant singing of hallelujas to the European services. . . As for the *Mail's* remarks about us personally, we did not understand the mandate of the Expenditure Commission to appear before it as a witness as a bribe to flatter the Government. We know there are



Englishmen who are incapable of it. To connect our delegation to England with our criticisms of the Bombay Government is singularly silly"

The arrest of Tilak resulted in a great wave of unrest all over the country and it was felt deep in the South. Typical of the people's feelings was this letter from a Tinnevely reader "Mr Tilak's arrest and prosecution is engaging everybody's mind here and it is impossible for anybody here to devote unruffled attention to his usual avocation". Another reader "The public, the educated portion, is paralysed with grief on hearing of the news of Mr. Tilak's prosecution and especially incarceration".

The Hindu published full reports of the proceedings of the trial for sedition in the Bombay sessions court beginning from the second week of September, 1897. On September 14 The Hindu carried, (probably the first occasion in its career) a two-column picture of Tilak on the Leader Page along with the story of his trial. The next day it carried the news of Tilak's conviction for sedition and sentence of 18 months' rigorous imprisonment.

The Hindu wrote: "Few people outside the native community can have any idea of the feeling that has been aroused by the news of Mr. Tilak's conviction, even in Madras. A description of the scene in our office on Tuesday evening may perhaps tend to convey some impression however vague of the extent of anxiety that had been caused in the minds of the native community as to the result of the trial

"From an early hour in the afternoon, enquiries began to pour in as to the nature of the latest telegram from our Special Correspondent in Bombay. Passers-by in Mount Road peeped in at the Hindu Office eager to catch a glimpse at the latest news. It was cruel to keep the anxious inquirers in suspense and we so arranged that the telegraphic intimations coming in from time to time about the progress of the trial were set in type immediately as they were received and posted in slips outside our office. When it was known that the judge had been summing up during the whole of the morning and had resumed even after tiffin, it was understood that the judge would soon cease speaking and that the fate of the Hon. Bal Gangadhar Tilak would be decided before the rising of the Court.

"The crowd below in front of our office grew thicker and more restless. Higher up in the verandah were gathered a large number of people including many distinguished gentlemen of the native community and the faces of many of them as they calculated in their mind the time that would be occupied by the various stage of the proceedings from the commencement of the judge's summing-up until the time of the court's rising, in the absence of the eagerly awaited telegram intimating the result, would have afforded a veritable study in physiognomy for the observer of human nature. Hour after hour passed; the crowd grew thicker and thicker; no telegram came. The people grew more and more restless; some stayed in restless anxiety, others struggled on in disappointment. Many a man in red turban and kakhi uniform was mistaken for a telegraph peon and was run after and the subsequent disappointment in each case was clearly perceptible among the crowd. Weary of waiting, a portion of the crowd went to the Telegraph Office. The G. P. O. at the Beach, we learn, was likewise crowded by a large number of students and other eager people during the evening. A run up at the staircase at length announced the arrival of the telegraph peon followed by an eager crowd on his trail. And when the

cover was opened and the telegram was read, Oh! what grief, what anguish was depicted in the faces around! Till a late hour in the night and even on the morning following, small knots of people could be seen gathered in the nooks and corners in the native quarters of the city and the conviction of Mr. Tilak was the all-engrossing topic of discussion. The Madras Times correctly describes the feeling among the native public in saying that the news of Mr. Tilak's conviction was received as a national calamity. It would be impossible for a good length of time yet to obliterate the memory of that eventful evening and it certainly cannot be said that the event has been conducive to the strengthening of the bonds existing between the native and Anglo-Indian communities in the country".

The Poona Correspondent had this to say of popular reaction in his city to Tilak's conviction. "The people are stupefied. I met many men that night (of conviction) while returning after making enquiries but their manner showed that they had no words to utter. The intensity of the feeling can only be understood by those who have lived in Poona and known it. Tilak was tried to stop sedition and discontent but the Government have entirely forgotten the most glaring aspect of their act. True, that many papers that have been thoughtlessly writing will check their flow of language and some may even go to the length of avoiding politics but there could be no greater incitement to seditious inclination or discontent than this trial of Hon. Mr. Tilak. Rightly or wrongly he was the man of the Deccan and his fate has sent a pang in the heart of many people who have not known much of politics or of the Shivaji movement"

The Hindu itself was very severe in its condemnation of the action against Tilak. "The conviction of Mr. Tilak has cast a gloom over the whole country", it said. "The news has been received everywhere with intense grief and with a sense of humiliation. It is not law and justice that have been vindicated but that the policy of reaction which for some time the enemies of the Indian people have been urging has triumphed. It has been the great object of these unscrupulous men whose one aim is to keep the people of India in a condition of slavery, to strike a crushing blow at the party of progress and now they have succeeded in their object. They have succeeded in producing depression and despair everywhere. The British Government in India would appear to have taken leave of its old traditions of freedom, benevolence and popular sympathy and have fallen entirely into the ways of irresponsible reactionaries; and British Indian statesmen would appear to feel ashamed of the noble aspirations of helping in the regeneration of the fallen and ancient races of India which inspired the policy and measures of their predecessors.

"In the conviction of Mr. Tilak the country beholds the beginning of a most mischievous and most deplorable struggle between the Indian people and their enemies in their own country for they have enemies who are very powerful, who have free access to the rulers and who command the service of the Tory Press in England. There will be rejoicing among them, no doubt. In their Press they will taunt the educated classes, sneer at them, vilify them and heap abuse and humiliation at them. They will boast of their strength and mock the Indian people for their dreams of liberty and political power. The feeling between the two races will become more bitter than it ever has been in the past. Nothing has happened during these 40 years to remind the people of

this country more of their abject helplessness and to give more poignancy to the consciousness of their political subjection than the recent doings of the Bombay Government. To their rulers they can appeal; but instead of giving them a patient and sympathetic hearing to which they are accustomed, the rulers now smite them with an iron rod".

What particularly astonished and angered *The Hindu* was the dictum propounded by the Judge in convicting Tilak that absence of affection was hostility to the Government and so constituted sedition. The paper devoted more than one leading article to combat this interpretation of the Sedition Act and published a number of letters from readers supporting its view.

When the Privy Council rejected Tilak's petition to appeal against his conviction, *The Hindu* wrote: "The refusal of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to admit an appeal to that tribunal from Mr. Tilak against the sentence of Mr. Justice Strachey will revive the feeling of sorrow and anger which was aroused throughout the country two months ago when that young judge of the Bombay High Court pronounced sentence, accepting the verdict of the European majority of the jury. An appeal to the Privy Council was the last hope that there was of justice being done to the unfortunate man whom the public will continue to believe to be innocent as well as of Mr. Strachey's dangerous interpretation of the law of sedition being set aside by the highest judicial authority in the empire in favour of another more in accord with commonsense and with the effective exercise of the freedom of public criticism — the much prized privilege of British citizens. This hope has now gone and there is nothing that the disappointed and depressed people of India can do but reflect on the strange vicissitudes of the freedom of a subject race without a direct voice in the government of its own country. The decision of the Privy Council will not lower Mr. Tilak in the estimation of his countrymen by a hair's breadth, he will continue to be regarded as an innocent man, unjustly prosecuted and convicted and the action of the Bombay Government will not now appear to be less misguided and impolitic".

S. S. Setlur was *The Hindu* Correspondent in Bombay who covered Tilak's case. Recalling the ferment caused by Tilak's imprisonment he wrote in *The Hindu* in 1928: "How refreshingly pleasant it is to recall those days when the ogre of selfish communalism had not yet begun to stalk unabashed across the horizon of public men injecting all those round with the virus of mutual cut-throatism. The stream of patriotism was welling up pure and bright without a speck of the soul-killing poison of caste or class prejudice".

Tilak was released on September 6, 1898 before the expiry of his term of sentence and *The Hindu* hailed it as "a triumph of justice and commonsense over the vindictive jealousy of a section of the dominant race". "Mr. Tilak has spent 12 months out of the 18 in prison and all the sufferings and privations incidental to a life in an Indian prison he has undergone. Anglo-Indians have heaped insults on him and officials have indulged their contumely at the imprisoned patriot".

Even while the country was agitated over the arrest and prosecution of Tilak another bombshell fell on it in the form of an unqualified apology which Gopal Krishna Gokhale tendered to the Bombay Government in regard to certain charges which he made against British soldiers engaged in anti-plague operations in Poona.

In an interview to the *Manchester Guardian* in London on July 2, 1897 Gokhale had said: "British soldiers ignorant of the language and contemptuous of the customs, the sentiments and the religious susceptibilities of the people had been let loose upon the town (Poona); they had wantonly destroyed property, appropriated jewellery, burnt furniture, entered kitchens and places of worship, contaminated food, spat upon idols or broke them by throwing them on the ground and dragged women into the streets for inspection before removal to hospitals. My correspondents whose word I can trust absolutely, report the violation of two women, one of whom is said afterwards to have committed suicide rather than survive her shame".

On July 13, the Secretary of State for India read a telegram from Lord Sandhurst, Governor of Bombay, in reply to a question in the House of Commons which said: "Regarding Gokhale's letter alleging violation of women, from all enquiries I have made, I am convinced this is still more gross and malevolent invention than that about stripping of women". Sir William Wedderburn who was not present in the Commons when this statement was made wrote a letter to *The Times* bearing testimony to Gokhale's "highest character for integrity" and his public spirit and urging a public enquiry into the Poona affairs. Gokhale later left for India and when he landed in Bombay he was met by the Commissioner of Police who asked him for fuller details of his allegations and if possible for the names of his correspondents in Poona. Gokhale refused to oblige the Police official but told him he proposed to act in a straightforward manner. Gokhale failed to get confirmation from his correspondents of the charges made by them and then he wrote his apology to the Governor and also to the members of the Plague Committee and to soldiers engaged in anti-plague operations.

The Bombay Correspondent of *The Hindu* called it a "long and dignified apology" in the course of which Gokhale said that uncontradicted reports were published in the Poona papers of all shades of opinion giving details. They left only one impression, that was, that dreadful things were happening in Poona after the murders (of Mr. Rand and a British soldier) causing tremendous sensation and uneasiness in England. When Indian loyalty was impugned on all sides he thought, Gokhale said, the matter was of supreme importance and his duty to publish all information he possessed and show to the English public that the plague irritation and not disloyalty was at the bottom of the murders. Now that the Government authoritatively declared that the allegations were baseless, Gokhale said, he accepted the contradiction and unreservedly apologised and accepted both moral and legal responsibility. He declined to disclose the names of his confidential correspondents and felt that acting otherwise was ungentlemanly.

"Prof. Gokhale is discredited and almost crushed for the present", wrote *The Hindu*. Our friends of the Anglo-Indian Press call him names, make fun of him and heap abuse upon him. It is a strange fatality that he of all men should be the cause of a great blow to the national party. A more sincere, well meaning, loyal Indian there does not exist. A young man of great talent and character, he would make his mark in any walk of life and if he were worldly minded, would make as large a fortune as any other educated man. But disdaining mere money and pleasure, he has devoted himself to the cause of his country's advancement. That such a man should now stand before the

world, humiliated and that his error should be the cause of our enemies', triumph can be understood only as the misfortune of the country. The Professor of Poona has no doubt been smashed but some facts have survived that misfortune and will live till an impartial public enquiry disproves them. Thousands of people in India and England will continue in the conviction that Lord Sandhurst was guilty of a serious blunder in employing British soldiers in a business in regard to which the most experienced and cautious civilians are apt to blunder seriously."

In a spirited letter to the Editor of *The Hindu* on January 8, 1898, Gokhale defended his action in apologising to the Governor of Bombay for his statement in the *Manchester Guardian*. He said: "The charges to which I had given currency were not like ordinary charges — the usual weapons of political warfare — but were grave accusations imputing disgraceful personal conduct to men who had been engaged in a very difficult and disagreeable work and if I was unable to substantiate them on any account it was my clear duty to withdraw them unreservedly and make the fullest reparation in my power. Before landing in Bombay I used to think that considering the crisis and considering what the newspapers had been writing for weeks — let alone private correspondence — a fair amount of substantiation ought not to be impossible, even making allowances for the peculiar conditions of Indian life. On my return to Bombay, however, it did not take me long — some of the men who had written to me were there to greet me — to discover that substantiation was out of the question and the amplest apology that I could offer thus became the only alternative. It was a fiery ordeal. After four months of hard — and till then by common consent useful — work for my countrymen in a far off land, to return to my country and find this bitter cup of humiliation awaiting my arrival, to have to give cause to our opponents for triumph and exultation and face the indignant reproaches of my disappointed countrymen!

But what was to be done? The situation had to be accepted as many before me have had to do under similar circumstances, as an attendant evil of over-zeal in a public cause. Disasters such as the present one, however deplorable, are more or less inseparable incidents of public life and of a struggle that has to be carried on at a distance of 5,000 miles between parties that are most unequally matched and that years of patient toil and endurance, attended by frequent reverses and misfortunes will be required before the incubus of a long unhappy past is successfully lifted up. Meanwhile, we must find strength and consolation in the fact that no great or just cause is ever really served by miserable subterfuge or can be permanently injured by the honest errors of an individual no matter who he be."

Gokhale ended his long letter with these words: "I have no doubt about the ultimate verdict on my conduct. The day will come when it will be generally recognised by my countrymen that this most unfortunate incident deserves to be thought of, as far as I am concerned, in sorrow and not in anger, and that under the most trying circumstances I had taken the only course which was consistent with duty and honour. Meanwhile, I am content to wait. Trials and troubles, accepted in the right spirit, only chasten and elevate. All that is necessary for me is to go on doing my duty whether it be sunshine or shade. Public duties undertaken at the bidding of no man cannot be laid down at the desire of anyone. Whether one works on a higher plane or a lower one is a

matter comparatively of small importance. One is always glad of the approbation of the public of what one has done. It is an object of legitimate satisfaction; it is also more; it is a source of strength and encouragement and moreover in this country it constitutes the only reward in public life. But it is not the highest purpose of existence, nor merely the highest. If it comes — to use the words of Herbert Spencer — “Well, if not well also, though not so well”.

The year 1898 was the year of plague in Madras Presidency and elsewhere in India. The Hindu was full of reports of anti-plague measures in Madras and in the towns and villages and for days on end the reader read nothing else but about plague. In this period of crisis, a reader, M. Thirumalachariar, suggested in a letter to the Editor “the spiritual way” to combat plague. He proposed that *Sahasranamam* (1000 names of God) be recited in every house and prayers offered to God for speedy deliverance from the scourge. “This practice of addressing the deity is not peculiar to us Hindus alone”, he said. “Even the Bible acknowledges that plague is God sent from above and is a curse intended to eradicate evil. Believing in the strength of our convictions and basing our belief on our ancient Vedic Sastras, it is gratifying to find that some Sri Vaishnavas have united and are conveying our most sincere prayers to Him by means of *Sahasranamam* and they are rounding the four main and tank streets of Triplicane every morning and evening, with their loud prayers to the deity, thus disinfecting the places spiritually. There is yet one more task to do and that done our security becomes guaranteed. Every one besides having his house clean and disinfected must make it a point to read the Ramayana or to arrange to hear it read to him or the Gita expounded to him”.

Let us end this chapter of gloom with a humorous editorial para which The Hindu wrote in March, 1898:

“Our contemporary of the Madras Times boasted the other day of the good will of its readers as evidenced by a subscriber who subscribed himself in ordering a copy as ‘yours most sincerely’. Today however, a correspondent sends us a communication beginning with “Respected Sir” and ending with “yours affectionately”. We are afraid his feelings towards us would have been the reverse of affection had he foreseen what we were going to do with his MS. We have ‘affectionately’ consigned it to the W. P. B.”

# The Hindu vs. Anglo-Indian Press

12

**I**N ITS EARLY years The Hindu as the organ of national opinion had to fight not only the British bureaucracy in the country but also its henchmen the Anglo-Indian Press (as the newspapers owned and conducted by Englishmen in India were described) which sowed dissension among the various communities, created suspicions about the loyalty of the nationalists, stood in the vanguard of repressive measures against the native Press and the people, in fact clamoured for them and generally created an air of distrust and confusion. Abetting them was the London Times' Correspondent in India and Reuter's men. Among the Anglo-Indian papers with whom The Hindu waged a long and sustained battle were the Madras Mail and Madras Times (its local contemporaries), the Times of India of Bombay, the Englishman and Statesman of Calcutta, the Pioneer of Lucknow and the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore. Initially it was an unequal battle for the Anglo-Indian Press was more powerful, resourceful and better equipped and organised. G. Subramania Aiyar in a speech in Madras in 1897 spoke of the odds against which the Indian Press had struggled.

"Indian journalism is altogether a new institution in this country", he said. "In fact journalism itself is altogether new and among other institutions we owe it to the generosity and liberal principles of British rule in this country. It is not an old institution. It is quite young; I think it is about 60 years old. In its earlier years journalism was entirely the occupation of Englishmen intended for the benefit of Englishmen and perhaps for the edification of the British Government. It went on for some time like that, but gradually as the native community acquired some measure of self-consciousness and began to take an interest in public affairs, the educated Indian gentlemen began to imitate, as they have imitated in so many other respects, the enterprise of the Englishmen. And in that way, I may say, Indian journalism is altogether in its infancy, but like other plants in the tropical climate, it has had, I should think, a speedy growth and now you see within the dominions comprised under British rule in India a large number of Indian journals more or less in a flourishing condition. They exist and work by the side of Anglo-Indian journals and although both these branches of the same institution have the same object in view, still oftentimes they differ from each other being inspired by different motives and pursuing different ends.

"As it is, the most influential section of Indian journalism flourished in the capital cities as may be expected. The chief exponents of Indian public opinion are to be found in four or five big capital cities of the empire. Journalism is necessarily a reflection of the growth of political activity, although in its later development it need not necessarily be confined to political interests. But it is political activity that has given rise, at all events in this country, to journalism and it is obvious that this activity makes itself first manifest in the capital cities wherein the most intelligent men find their occupation. But latterly, as political activity expands and general intelligence also expands it puts forth branches in the districts also and you will now see in some districts away from the capital cities, there are some journals pursuing a useful and interesting career. It is also to be observed that the most influential of Indian journals — journals that are published in the capital cities — are in the language of the rulers, whereas very properly the journals conducted in the districts are in the language of the people, although some of the journals in the districts are conducted in the English language. The vernacular Press, as it is called, are in the hands of an inferior set of men. It must be confessed that these men, not possessing sufficient education, often commit errors. It must be noticed that the vernacular languages are not quite suited to the discussion of public questions. Our forefathers and our countrymen not educated in English, were not in the habit of discussing questions concerning the Government and hardly any enlightened conversation takes place among them about those measures of imperial policy and imperial interests that are discussed in English journals, nor is there any preserved literature bearing upon such subjects. Therefore those gentlemen that conduct the vernacular Press are often at a loss to find suitable words to express themselves and as is often the case with people that want to express their feelings they resort to exaggeration or hyperbole without meaning the slightest offence by the language they make use of."

"Without meaning to reflect in any boastful language about the profession to which I belong I may say that journals conducted in the English language in the capital cities deserve much respect. They are more or less in the hands of those that have received the highest education and I think they are doing their work honestly and efficiently."

"Anglo-Indian journals are certainly more powerful, more prosperous and more influential than Indian journals. They know their trade and they have got facilities which we have not. But I have no doubt that in course of time, Indian journals will beat Anglo-Indian journals not only in their usefulness, but in all the circumstances that go to make journalism successful. Journalism to Englishmen here is more or less a trade, a means of livelihood, but to Indians journalism is something more earnest, something more nearly touching the interests of their country. Journalism to Indians is a means of public good. It is not only a means of advancing public interest, but it advances the interests of the country in all directions. The Indian journalist is in greater touch with the people. He knows what they want—our Anglo-Indian friends do not admit this — still notwithstanding what they say it is a fact that an Indian journalist is in real touch with the people. He knows what their wants are, he knows their grievances and he knows their feelings and therefore he is a more correct and more reliable and well-informed means



of information to Government than the Anglo-Indian journalist can be. Journalism is useful to Government more as a means of information than as a means of criticism upon itself. Therefore I say in course of time Indian journalism is likely to make itself more useful than its Anglo-Indian rival. It has unfortunately taken a position of opposition to Government. In the very nature of the case, it must be so because you know the constitution of India. It contains no provision for a regular and constitutional method of representing the side which is opposed to the officials in power for the time being. Unfortunately in this country, Government views only one side of the question, no member of Government expresses an opinion opposed to the policy of the Government. If he did it would be considered as disobedience. There is no such thing as an opposition here and the function has necessarily to be discharged by the Indian Press more than the Anglo-Indian Press. In this way Indian journalists discharge a very honourable function which unfortunately is often misunderstood.

"In exercising the function of the opposition, Indian journalists have a manner of expressing opinion which is not always complimentary to the Government and this leads to misunderstanding. It could not lead to such misunderstanding if there were proper means of intercourse between the public and those that represent the Government. We are charged with disloyalty and with other charges for which we are not answerable in the least. As I have said Indian journalists not only serve Government but the public at large".

As mentioned by Subramania Aiyer the writings in the Vernacular Press (as the Indian language Press was called) especially in Bengal, provoked the Anglo-Indian Press and the bureaucracy and The Hindu advised caution and restraint on it. Writing in 1884 The Hindu said: "As we feared the insane writings of some of the vernacular journals of Bengal have placed a weapon in the hands of the enemies of Indian progress which we may be sure will be wielded with all the adroitness and effect of practised detractors. It will be quite out of harmony with the instincts of demoralised and partisan journalism, if the recent excited writings of the Bengali Press be not converted into political capital as they have actually been done by the Englishman, the Pioneer, and the Calcutta Correspondent of The Times".

The Hindu pointed out how the writings in the Anglo-Indian Press were followed in England and copied by the English Press and led to wrong opinion about India. "It is therefore of the utmost importance to keep the leaders of public opinion in that country well and accurately informed on all Indian questions and to adopt every means by which they will be prevented from being misled by Anglo-Indian writers and their English friends. Everything that is calculated to add a colour of genuineness to the false and interested representations of our adversaries must be carefully avoided. Exaggeration, sweeping generalisations, personal criticism, rabid and discourteous writing, want of moderation in thought and language, all these are calculated to do this and the conductors of the native Press cannot exercise too much caution in avoiding these blemishes which young and inexperienced as native journalism is, its agents are apt to fall into. We must calculate the strength of our adversaries and our own weaknesses. We have to struggle to avoid dishonest men, who possess influence and resources and who easily impress with their prejudices the blank minds of their well meaning countrymen in England".

The Hindu's advice to the vernacular Press was: "Let us lay close to our minds that with the co-operation and sympathy of Anglo-Indians we will find the path of our progress smooth and comparatively easy; but with their antipathy and resistance we will lose much that we may be obviously qualified for and will cause to be put off indefinitely the introduction of the simplest and most harmless reforms. Sobriety, patience, fore-thought and tolerance are as much indications of a state of mind fit for political power as scurrilous writing, abuse of opponents, puerile fretfulness and want of forethought indicate a frame of mind unfit for the exercise of political privileges. We do not by any means extenuate the faults of some of the Anglo-Indian writers. But is it not our business more to vindicate our claims to new concessions than to assert our equality to certain Anglo-Indians who are bound to the country by no responsibility whatever for its well-being?"

The Hindu on another occasion, in 1889, praised the role of the Indian language Press against an attack by the Anglo-Indian papers. Commenting on the criticism of the Indian Press in the Civil and Military Gazette (which it described as "one of the most scurrilous of Anglo-Indian newspapers") by a former employee of the paper, The Hindu wrote: "The native Press naturally jealous of the irresponsible power vested in the bureaucracy and closely watching the doings of the public servants, from the Viceroy downwards, exposes, sometimes in rather warm language, the misdeeds and vagaries of officials. Substantial has been the benefit that the administration has derived from the increasing vigilance and ability of the native Press, though the officials are reluctant to admit this. Many an official has suffered and when an "experienced officer" in upper India complained to the writer of the article under comment, that the "power of the native Press has demoralised the whole administration of the Province", he was only giving out in an exaggerated language how the Press was fulfilling its function which it is intended to fulfil. Official evildoers who have been victims to the jealous vigilance of the native Press are not to be expected to admire it and to advocate the enhancement of its privileges. Apart from its influence on the individual officials, on the opinion and tendencies of the people also the native Press has come to exercise great power. It diffuses liberal notions, encourages public spirit exposes hypocrisy, and official obstruction; in fact it is the unflinching and the only critic of our bureaucratic Government. It will be understood therefore why the native Press is so strongly denounced"

The Hindu added "We know in one grave crisis at least the influence of the vernacular Press was spontaneously exerted on behalf of Government. We refer to the crisis of 1885 when the threat of a Russian invasion of Afghanistan was disturbing our politicians. At that time the editors of the Vernacular papers of this city met together and adopted a resolution not to vex the Government at that crisis by any strong criticisms or by pursuing the usual demands for political concessions. This resolution had a remarkable effect on the vernacular papers of other presidencies and indeed the effect was so happy that we believe that the Viceroy also made an allusion to that circumstance on a public occasion. This does not show that at times of trouble the mischievous influence of the Vernacular Press will gain ascendancy. There is no doubt that the native Press is thoroughly loyal at heart to the British Government. But being inexperienced and having to express foreign ideas

and to comment on foreign institutions the inferior section of it commits mistakes. It will be unfair to put upon it the construction that some partisan writers are disposed to do. The remedy is not to establish a system of direct relations between Government and the Press but to leave the evil to be cured by the example of the better class of journals and the effect of expanding education on the reading public as well as on those that enter the honourable and useful profession of journalism”.

In a strong attack in August, 1897 on the Anglo-Indian Press for its campaign of vilification against the Indian Press and Indians following the Poona murders and arrest of Tilak, *The Hindu* particularly mentioned the *Englishman* and the *C. and M. Gazette* and said “Almost every important Anglo-Indian newspaper is filled every day with lying malice against the people and yet our great Viceroy and Governors are apparently of opinion that the *Englishman*, the *C. and M. Gazette* and a score of other newspapers indulging in similar abuse are the very paragons of responsible journalism, the prop and pillar of the British Empire and that it is the native Press that excited disaffection against British rule. Supposing Lord Canning had yielded to the Anglo-Indians’ passionate clamour for revenge after the Mutiny what would have been the consequence? Still it is the same cry for revenge that we hear on every side at this moment and it is to this cry that Lord Elgin (Viceroy) and Lord Sandhurst (Governor of Bombay) have been weak enough to yield. What is the Government doing, may we ask, to put down this constant attack on the people who cannot possibly think pleasant things of English people in the face of the calumny and spiteful abuse hurled against them?”

Rebuking the Madras Mail for its remarks about *The Hindu*, the paper wrote in September, 1897 “It is time that the Madras Mail ceased writing nonsense about *The Hindu*. If it is ambitious of playing the Times of India’s role in Madras it is quite welcome to its endeavours. But it will no more succeed in bringing about here the same political atmosphere that has recently disgraced Bombay than it will in producing the earthquake that has ruined Assam. Fortunately in Madras we have got a Government conducted by sensible men who will not sit at the feet of the Madras Mail to receive their lessons in administrative work”.

Reuter’s agency came in for severe strictures at the hands of *The Hindu* in June, 1899 for its “tendentious reports” sent from India. “In the nature of things”, *The Hindu* wrote, “one could have thought that Reuter’s agents were in India merely to wire home important Indian news. But if one thought so one was woefully mistaken. Whatever they may be in other parts of the world, in India they are political partisans — exponents of the worst kind of anti-native prejudice first and telegraphic recorders of facts next. In every occurrence of the sensational sort in recent years they have consistently taken the side bitterly opposed to native feeling and interests. We could not forget the messages wired home when the sedition scare was at its height in Poona and elsewhere. When the leaders of the Bombay Mahomedan community exposed the utter falsehood of the report sent by them to England, that they had instigated the plague riots there, they had not even the gentlemanliness to apologise. Other instances of mendacity on their part would easily occur to those who have been regular readers of the native Indian newspapers. But it is not merely in misrepresenting patent facts or facts which they could ascertain with very little trouble that Reuter’s Indian agents out-Herod the

Anglo-Indian journalistic Herod While they are ever on the look-out for incidents calculated to damn the Indian in any sense, to telegraph them home with embellishments suggested or supplied by their own fertile imagination, they make it a rule to suppress or ignore the most flagrant scandals that tell against the British in this country"

Incidentally, The Hindu had to bale out Reuter from an awkward predicament which one of its cables to India landed it in the columns of the *Madras Times* in 1907 Here is the story in the words of The Hindu

"The Madras Times confesses this morning that it cannot understand "why the news of the death of Herbert Mills had been telegraphed to us" We hope Reuter would survive the criticism Our contemporary has rummaged the pages of who's who and Col Herbert James Mills C B, one of the several Mills the compilation speaks of has attracted its attention. But the colonel is still hale and healthy and surely he could not have died Our contemporary was apparently puzzled and wondered who could this unheard of being be. Reuter cannot wholly escape blame He mutilated the name and was thus responsible for the unnecessary labour he inflicted upon the Madras Times The deceased gentleman was neither "Col. Herbert Mills", nor "Col Herbert James Mills" He was no other than Herbert Mills Birdwood who was born in Belgaum in the Bombay Presidency, and was a judge of the Bombay High Court, Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University and member of the Executive Council of the Governor of Bombay. On February 17, 1895, he even acted as Governor of Bombay. Our contemporary will thus see that Reuter was justified in telegraphing the news though he had absolutely no excuse whatsoever for cutting short the name and thereby bamboozling the good people of Madras"

The Madras Times had a strange complaint against The Hindu, too, which was referred to by the latter in June, 1909 The Madras Times had expressed its regret that "the paper in question (The Hindu) is widely read among the Indian community and its opinions carry weight" "It is to be hoped", The Hindu replied, "that the day may never come—than which there can be no surer sign of national decadence—when the Indian community will give up reading The Hindu and find satisfaction in reading a paper like *The Madras Times*"

In the 1890s and earlier Indian papers, and The Hindu was no exception, had to rely on the more resourceful and prosperous Anglo-Indian papers for lifting foreign stories from their pages and this was an accepted practice until the Government of India brought forward the Telegraph Copyright Bill before the Imperial Legislative Council which would have stopped this The Hindu was not slow to point out that the Anglo-Indian papers were equally guilty of the practice of pinching news

"The war in South Africa", it wrote in November, 1899, "affords the best test of journalistic morality which half a dozen Anglo-Indian papers were preaching, a few weeks ago in connection with the Telegraph Copyright Bill now pending before the Supreme Legislative Council. The *Englishman*, The *C and M Gazette*, the *Pioneer*, the *Times of India*, the *Bombay Gazettee*, and the *Madras Mail* — these were the only papers that supported the bill and yet every one of these papers with the exception perhaps of the Allahabad Oracle, is day after day copying columns of special news obtained by one or two enterprising papers The greatest sinners in this respect are the Mail in Madras, the Times in Bombay and the Englishman in Calcutta. These papers wanted not

only the prohibition of news being copied but of being commented on also though the most egoistical of the lot, the Bombay Times has not had the courtesy of acknowledging that it owed information to the enterprise of its local rival. The Government of India cannot ignore this fact when the bill comes to be considered within the next few days and so far as the bill is concerned, it must be admitted that a fortuitous light has now been thrown on the so called morality of those to protect whose interests the bill has been framed"

When the *Englishman* completed 75 years of its existence in 1896 (incidentally claiming to be one of the oldest established newspapers in India) The Hindu paid it a graceful tribute. "75 years is a long period", it said, "in the life of even newspapers and much as we may differ from the *Englishman's* politics we have much pleasure in congratulating our contemporary on the attainment of the patriarchal age among Indian journals"

The Hindu had a soft corner for the Statesman of Calcutta. It said of it in 1895 "The Statesman is singularly free from prejudice and its sincere advocacy of the Indian cause is well and widely known. The pro-Indian attitude of our contemporary enhances the value of its opinions. It draws a nice distinction between the faith of the Englishman in principles and the implicit obedience of the Hindu to custom"

Not so was The Hindu's feelings towards the Times of India especially during the troublous times of 1897 when Maharashtra was seething with discontent. The Hindu wrote on one occasion in 1897 "Retribution has never overtaken a malefactor more quickly than it has that sworn enemy of educated Indians, the *Times of India*. This journal delighted in heaping ignominious accusations on Indian journalists to whom it attributed all sorts of imaginary wickedness. No epithet was strong enough for the *Times of India* to hurl against these devoted people. Day after day it poured on their heads torrents of its venomous invective. Intoxicated with its own conceited imaginings, it placed no limit of reason or decency on the extent of its vituperative operations. But what has it now done?"

The Hindu went on to quote the *Times of India's* attack on two judges of the Bombay High Court including Mr Justice Ranade, for transferring a case to the High Court sessions and its subsequent apology for its remarks which it claimed were due to oversight. The Hindu's comment was "After the exposure of its falsehoods about certain native regiments and after the admission of oversight, which the people may account in another way, the *Times of India* has indubitably established the claim to be regarded as the very type of all that it represented — and falsely represented — Indian journals to be. We have only one word for the Times of India's type of Journalism. It is disgraceful".

The Hindu was relentless in its attack on the Anglo-Indian Press. It wrote in January, 1900 "The *Englishman*, the *Pioneer* and the *Times of India* are three well known organs of Anglo-Indian opinion which most violently oppose the advancement of the Indian people. Much of the harsh treatment which of late we have received from our rulers is due to their incitement and in the future Indian reforms we apprehend much trouble from these and other champions of the interests of the dominant class".

The *Times of India* hit the headlines by its vituperative attack on Indians in January, 1900. It wrote "Mr Ranade's experience as a judge must have

convinced him long ago that the people of this country set no value upon truth for its own sake. Indeed, the average Hindu lies by preference. Sentiments, however lofty and ennobling, are thrown away upon people who are dead to the rudiments of virtue. Widow remarriage (sic), sati, polygamy, child marriage — all these are surface blemishes, symptoms, and signs of the profoundly deepseated canker at the heart of Indian life — its hopeless want of honesty, its unexampled mendacity. The mass of the people are brought up in an atmosphere of lies. From the cradle to the grave they are shadowed by the habits of lying and servility”.

The Hindu commented “For malicious mendacity this description is unequalled and could anything but the subject condition of our people have prompted such a mean, cowardly attack? And does any responsible Anglo-Indian believe that this is the way to create affection, or harmony between the British and Indian races in this country? If it is not so, will the Government allow cowardly Anglo-Indian journals to libel the people of India in this vile fashion in the face of the new provision in the Penal Code?”

But the Times of India suffered serious loss of face when an editorial writer or some imp of mischief played a dirty trick on it in April, 1905. Let The Hindu tell the story.

“The Times of India has been somewhat unpleasantly entangled in the controversy about Lord Curzon’s convocation speech. Who did the mischief it is not known. It began so far as we know in this way. A certain paper published what purported to be an article that had appeared in *The Times of India*. The article began with the sentence. ‘One might well wish that Lord Curzon had not returned to India for the second time for he could not have chosen a more effective way of wrecking his reputation than he has done’. The rest of it was more or less in the same strain. This was repeatedly reprinted by newspaper after newspaper until at last our Bombay contemporary felt wronged that such a devout worshipper of Lord Curzon should have been represented as saying uncomplimentary things about his hero and published a contradiction. But notwithstanding the contradiction the article is being circulated as being the product of the Times of India editorial staff both in India and England. The contradiction may not reach all parties to whom the original article would have gone; and one can well feel sympathy for a journal which, while cherishing the most fervent regard for the Viceroy, is represented as saying very harsh and unexpected things about His Excellency. The Royalist cannot like to be represented as a demagogue and a robust royalist like *The Times of India* which can by no means reconcile itself to being so represented, is bound to be indignant when small men bent upon mischief drag it down from its dignified height to be classed among the common crowd of Lord Curzon’s revilers”. (For the information of the reader it may be stated it was in his famous or infamous convocation speech in Calcutta that Lord Curzon attacked Indians as people who attached no value to truth. And he made many other remarks which offended Indian sentiment and character)

In 1907, a year before the 50th anniversary of the Indian Mutiny (or Rebellion as nationalists called it) a scare was started by the Anglo-Indian Press of alleged plots and conspiracies for another rising and they provoked the authorities to launch repressive measures against the people and these fell heavily on the Punjab and resulted in the Nationalist leader there, Lala

Lajpat Rai, being deported to Mandalay The Hindu cried out in agony: "Is there to be no restraint to the licence of the Anglo-Indian Press? They are shamelessly abusing their high privilege and setting class against class and all classes against the Government. They have exasperated a loyal and law abiding people. They have offered the grossest affronts to popular aspirations and national ideals. They vilified the accredited leaders of the Indian community. They have successfully exhorted the Government to adopt the most repressive measures to stifle public opinion in the country. They have carried on a campaign of unscrupulous and mendacious misrepresentation and calumny. They still cry for blood. It seems as if the Government are moving to their dictation. Perhaps the next move is to gag the Indian Press by another ordinance. There is nothing surprising in this attitude of Englishmen in India. There are notorious hounds and at one time they well nigh hounded a Governor-General out of India" (The reference is to Lord Ripon who was very unpopular with Englishmen in India and very popular with the Indian people).

The Hindu saw in the Punjab repression the "machination of the Anglo-Indian wire-pulling agency in the country, whose object is to broadcast in England misrepresentation and calumnies of the worst description regarding the people of this country, especially the educated classes. The evidence which we now have with us shows that not only Reuter's agency plays a most discreditable part in disseminating untrue and exaggerated reports of matters Indian in England and of matters English in India but that the Anglo-Indian correspondents of the Anglo-Indian Press vie with each other in circulating in India itself false reports and calumnious representations"

Typical of the kind of sensational reports which appeared in the British Press The Hindu quoted the following headlines and report in one paper. "Rising in India. Alarming reports from two great Provinces. Troops moving. Serious situation in Lahore. Murders in Bengal. 50th anniversary of the Mutiny. On the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Indian Mutiny news has arrived of an alarming rising in Bengal and the Punjab. Grave native disorders have simultaneously broken out in these two widely separated provinces. Bands of country Hindus armed with bludgeons have invaded the town of Lahore and lawless mobs of Hindus and Mahomedans have begun to ravage the countryside in the districts of Eastern Bengal. Villages have been plundered and burnt and murders have been committed. Troops and mounted police are now pouring into Lahore to reinforce the garrison and repress violence. A dangerous agitator has been arrested and deported. The excitement and anxiety throughout India are intense in view of the immense native population which may become affected by the seditious movement. It is feared that more serious troubles are to follow".

The Hindu commented "It seems to us that there cannot be a more shameful exhibition of nefarious practices which the Anglo-Indian Press in this country employs for unworthy partisan purposes. A whole nation is slandered and calumniated by such dark devices not only to the British public but to the civilised world by means of the telegraph. Lord Curzon talked in his convocation speech of the exaggerations and untrue representations of the native Press in India. It is quite clear that this class has nothing to learn from the members of the alien race who ply the pen in and reap rich rewards from this country. Reuter's agency which systematically misrepresents and vilifies the

people of India is subsidised to a large extent by the Government of this country. It is therefore paid for its ill offices by the Indian tax-payer."

In another comment on the Anglo-Indian Press in August, 1909, *The Hindu* said "Most of the Anglo-Indian papers seem to consider themselves the watchdogs of the British Government in this country. They always take a high and mighty tone with the alleged delinquencies of Indians and think it their special mission to egg on the Government to take this action or that."

When the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885 the Anglo-Indian Press was not happy, nor was the Press in England. Replying to *The Times* which was in the forefront of the critics *The Hindu* wrote "It ill becomes the first newspaper of the civilised world to receive as it did the aspirations of young India. A National Indian Congress such as that which met at Calcutta last Christmas (1886) and at Bombay the year previous is a matter for real congratulation to the natives of India and for just pride and satisfaction to our English rulers. It is among the first fruits of the English rule in India. It is absurd to educate our sons in the first place and then to expect them to behave as uneducated children. The liberty of the Press, the high English education given in schools and colleges all over the vast Indian continent, the administration of pure and impartial justice — all established and steadily maintained by an illustrious body of British statesmen — must give rise to their correlative virtues in the subject population. Is this a matter deserving the sneers of the world's Thunderer? Is it not on the contrary entitled to receive its warm support and sympathy?"

*The Hindu* quoted in July, 1889 a typical example of a mendacious report sent to his paper by the *Times'* correspondent in India. "We were thunder-struck", *The Hindu* wrote, "when we read a telegram in *The Times* accusing a native barrister of Bombay of the theft of arms from the local arsenal. According to the story sent by the *Times* Correspondent from Calcutta, a native barrister having been discovered concealing his sword, his home was searched and numerous fire arms and some cannonballs were seized. The correspondent added that the evidence showed that the robberies were systematic and concerted. The mendacity of the Calcutta correspondent of *The Times* is well known. Still nobody would have thought he was capable of such recklessness in communicating to the English public imaginary occurrences which are improbable on their very face. What really happened was that following the searching of a native burnisher who was found to have a sword of steel hidden away in the small of his back, the discovery of the theft of arms was made. The correspondent misread the word burnisher as barrister and made up the rest of the story which was intended to attack the Congress since native pleaders and barristers are well known to be the leading spirits of the Congress movement. *The Times* is willing to publish any trash from its correspondent, only it must be damaging to the natives of India".

We shall conclude this chapter with an account of what the London *Times* thought of the Indian Press. In a review in January, 1902 (which was reproduced by *The Hindu*) by a special correspondent, it was stated that there were about 500 native newspapers and periodicals of which nearly 50 were published in English. The important language papers were in Urdu, Bengali, Marathi, Hindi and Tamil. The great majority of the newspapers were weeklies with subscriptions averaging from Rs. 1 to Rs. 3 per annum and the total



number of subscribers claimed for them being 2,25,000. The Chief centres of journalism were Bombay, Calcutta, Poona and Madras. "The business aspect of native journalism is not encouraging, the remuneration both of proprietors and editors being small. Apart from the few successful journals with large circulations whose profits are counted in three figures of rupees per month, the average native journal is edited by a man of limited education on a monthly salary of from Rs. 15 to Rs. 50 or else by the proprietor who sometimes runs his newspaper at a loss in the general interests of his press. Young men of ability and position feel no inducements to take up a journalistic or literary career. Many editors follow another calling and look after their newspapers in their spare time. Pleaders are often editors and one Calcutta paper is owned by a syndicate of native doctors and primarily intended to advertise the medicines they invent. There is little journalistic fellow feeling, the profession has no association or clubs. These conditions account for many shortcomings of style and information but they do not prevent the acquisition of a large measure of power and influence by the native Press as a whole. Taken as a whole the native Press is not tainted with corruption. Its methods would certainly compare favourably with those in vogue in certain western countries. It owes its main influence not to the practice of blackmail and oppression, but to the political curiosity of the newly educated classes, whose character and aspirations it faithfully reflects. The generally uniform nature of these sentiments which with only minor variations are shared by educated natives in all parts of India, enables us in a rough way to review the policy and opinion of the native journals as a single whole.

"No Press was ever so scurrilous in its abuse of individuals, none so warm-hearted in its capacity for hero worship and personal devotion. The basest insinuations as to the motives of a Government for an unpopular step are followed the next day by the most honorific eulogies on the same body for lenient action or a sympathetic word. The grossest calumnies on the class of Anglo-Indians are mingled with the most generous recognition of the virtues of the British nation and the qualities which give ascendancy to her sons. The writings of Indians reveal on every page the strange extravagant contrast of the oriental mind. The political creed of the majority of the native newspapers is everywhere the same. It is based on a sincere profession of the most profound loyalty coupled with the vaguest and most contradictory notions on the practice of loyalty. The most genuine element of this feeling is a personal devotion to the sovereign which in the case of Queen Victoria was certainly a very strong link attaching India to the Empire and which found expression at her death in a marvellous outpouring of sorrow and devotion by the voice of every caste and race."

# End of a Great Partnership

13

**T**HE GREAT PARTNERSHIP between G. Subramania Aiyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar which gave birth to The Hindu 20 years previously and had nurtured and sustained it through a long period of struggle and conflict broke up in October, 1898. A notice printed on October 3, 1898, announced the "dissolution of the partnership between G. Subramania Aiyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar in the proprietorship of The Hindu newspaper and its Press, plant and building etc. by mutual agreement from September 14, 1898". It also announced that Veeraraghavachariar had become the sole proprietor of The Hindu and G. Subramania Aiyer had ceased to have any proprietary interest with The Hindu and that "he has consequently no interest in the assets of the partnership relating to The Hindu". Although the agreement was signed on September 14, G. Subramania Aiyer's name as the proprietor continued to be on the imprint till October 1.

The dissolution of the partnership was sought by G. Subramania Aiyer after The Hindu had passed through a year of financial strain in 1897. Recalling this Veeraraghavachariar said later: "I cannot disguise the fact that the proposal came upon me as a thunderbolt. The severance of the partnership between us I had never dreamt of. The deep foundations of our friendship were laid during our scholastic career, the scaffolding was erected at the Triplicane Literary Society, the superstructure was raised at Pachappa's and the whole was closely cemented at The Hindu office. We had worked shoulder to shoulder more than a quarter of a century and it was therefore with the greatest sorrow and pain that I received the proposal."

It was noticed that after G. Subramania Aiyer's return from England in July 1897 there was a sudden and unmistakable absence of leading articles and news on social reform so dear to Subramania Aiyer's heart and readers' letters on the social problems of the day were also conspicuous by their absence. This was a significant pointer to the coming crisis between the two partners.

Subramania Aiyer's crusade against social evils in Hindu society and his advocacy of a materialist philosophy through the columns of The Hindu, while it pleased a section of the educated Indians steeped in Western culture, habits and thinking, offended a very large part of Hindu society, the core of which continued to stick to its orthodoxy. In the early stages, The Hindu while

urging social reform had opposed state intervention but it changed its stand during the controversy over the Age of Consent bill introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council and supported Government legislation to impose social reform. The Hindu went so far as to say that when far reaching social reforms had to be undertaken the state should brush aside opposition which was at variance with such measures. Subramania Aiyer's partner, Veeraraghavachariar, did not go along with this extreme view and he feared that the circulation of the paper would be affected as a majority of the people were not ready for progressive social legislation.

As one of The Hindu's early employees, K. Subba Rao, remarked "G Subramania Aiyer and Veeraraghavachariar were intimate friends but social reform was the apple of discord thrown in their midst" Subba Rao, who wrote a series of articles in The Hindu on the early years of the paper, added. "The pent up differences between them grew in intensity and at times found vent in bitter and vindictive abuse on each side. They represented two incompatible temperaments. One was a rigid disciplinarian, spoke little and resolutely stuck to his plans (this was Subramania Aiyer). The other by his very nature and habit talked a great deal, promised a great deal and offered excuses for indefinitely long periods (this was Veeraraghavachariar). One would sit for hours together like a wooden statue intent on his own thoughts, with barely a word or two at odd and long intervals. The other extended to all, at all times, the right hand of welcome. The one was always chary of undertaking any responsibility. The other would eagerly saddle himself with all sorts of burdens on the mere mention of them and would not hesitate to say that he would try his best even to bring the sun and the moon down to earth, if such a rosy picture would but gladden the heart of his friends.

"It often struck me that each of these two life-long friends had the defects and merits which the other had not. So long as the finances of the office were in a moderately manageable condition and so long as their individual and joint reputations shone brilliantly and without a strain on their names their fellowship or friendship did not suffer from their constitutional divergence of outlook. But when practical social reform assumed a place of high importance in the Editor's every day public work, utterances and writings and when their jointly owned paper became the mouthpiece for the incessant propagation of one set of extreme views and when, what is more to the point, owing to a number of allied causes, circulation began to decrease or in other words even if the circulation did not fall, it did not increase to the desired maximum level to bring into the office coffers the indispensable amount of money and outside effort to get financial help proved more abortive than successful, then the mutual differences of view — till then subsisting beneath the surface assumed formidable proportions. Instead of quarrelling at distant intervals, angry talk and mutual distrust began to be visible at inconvenient short intervals. Veeraraghavachariar had great powers of organisation and conciliation. I often wondered how these two eminent persons who were so well qualified to settle intercommunal and interprovincial disputes, were not able to compose satisfactorily their own comparatively small personal equations. I was often grieved beyond expression when I was called by both to arbitrate when words ran high between them. A colleague and subordinate could not be in a worse position than I often found myself on these occasions. It was only the

most discreet silence on my part without any leaning on either side that enabled me to retain the goodwill of both. I knew each was at fault in some point or other. I also knew that each disliked to the utmost any mention of his own defect. I tried to pacify them both and appeal to the importance of the public work they were engaged in. At last after separation each would engage me for hours together to explain his own position and to justify the same."

Subba Rao recalled that fearing for the future of the paper Veeraraghavachariar appealed to him not to utilise the columns of *The Hindu* almost exclusively for the promotion of social reform and to start a separate journal which could be wholly devoted for the purpose. He told him that the financial embarrassment in which *The Hindu* found itself was due a great deal to the changed policy of the Editor. It was then decided to start a weekly journal, the *Indian Social Reformer*, under the direction of a triumvirate, K. Natarajan and K. Subba Rao, both of them on the staff of *The Hindu*, and A. Subba Rao. The *Indian Social Reformer* was shifted to Bombay when K. Natarajan left *The Hindu* after G. Subramania Aiyer severed his connection with it.

With all the defects in his make-up mentioned by Subba Rao, Veeraraghavachariar was a great organiser and manager and he it was who kept the pot boiling when it became a question of very survival. In its early days *The Hindu* had to live on donations and public benefactions and Veeraraghavachariar managed this part of his job very well and a great blow fell on him when the Maharaja of Vizianagaram, a stout patron of the paper, died in May, 1897 at a crucial time when his financial help was most needed.

V. S. Srinivasa Sastri said of Veeraraghavachariar: "He had unrivalled knowledge of men and things and his conversation was remarkably attractive if somewhat elusory. What pleased me most in him was his flair for extracts with a literary flavour from English papers which were a regular feature of *The Hindu* in his time. I used to marvel at the dexterity of his scissors as they moved unerringly along the black line while he seemed to be looking at me in earnest talk".

K. Vyasa Rao, a regular contributor to *The Hindu*, wrote in an article: "M. Veeraraghavachariar was not only the wellknown Manager of *The Hindu* but also of public affairs and movements in general. When the session of the Congress that was first held in Madras came off in 1887 *The Hindu* and its conductors had become all India entities. Mr. Veeraraghavachariar particularly had come to be regarded as a sort of general Manager for all kinds of progressive undertakings. Whoever desired publicity to promote any cause found the goodwill of *The Hindu* indispensable. . . . *The Hindu* had come to be recognised as a guarantee of support to the cause of the public whenever required. The strange position arose that the public would not give up *The Hindu* and *The Hindu* could not desert the interest of the public with impunity".

With all his influence and prestige, Veeraraghavachariar did not interfere with the policy of the paper as enunciated by Subramania Aiyer and his editorial freedom even when Subramania Aiyer allowed Eardley Norton, who was writing a column for *The Hindu* under a pseudonym, to lampoon and ridicule the Maharaja of Vizianagaram and Dr. (later Sir) S. Subramania Aiyer, great patrons and benefactors of the paper. It was only when Norton made himself unpopular in Congress circles in Madras by uncharitable remarks that

the extraordinary spectacle of Veeraraghavachariar and G. Subramania Aiyer openly coming into conflict in the columns of *The Hindu* over the question of support to Norton in the Municipal election as against Lodd Govindas was witnessed

For Veeraraghavachariar was the custodian of Congress prestige in Madras, his was the master brain which organised every Congress session that was held in Madras from 1887, he it was who brought out pamphlets in Tamil on the aims and objectives of the Congress and the resolutions passed by it and thereby made the National organisation more popular and broad based. He invariably led the Madras delegates to the Congress sessions outside Madras and he bore the brunt of seeing to their comforts and satisfaction. He even faced a vote of censure by them at one session as we have seen in a previous chapter. He was a national leader in his own right as recognised by Dadabhai Naoroji and other leaders and he spoke on the burning topics of the day at the various sessions of the Congress. At its fourth session in Calcutta in 1890, he vigorously supported a proposal that a session of the Congress be held in London. "I have not the least doubt that an English agitation is very essential to the success of our undertaking", he said. "It is no use breaking one's head against the stone or wooden walls here. You have already considered it necessary to have a Congress agency in England, to remove your battlefields to England, to the very heart of London. That is the logical sequence of the delegation sent last year to England"

Lord Ripon in his diary (1885) had this entry during his visit to Madras: "My first visitors at Madras were a couple of Hindu gentlemen, Editors of the local newspaper, *The Hindu*; their names: G. Subramania Aiyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar; intelligent, clear-headed men contrasting by no means unfavourably with men of their profession in London. Their manners were good. The matters principally discussed between us were the heavy pressures of land revenue on Madras peasantry, the burden of the salt tax, the abuses connected with the civil courts, the ruin of the cotton manufacture industry by the enforced free trade with England, the unreality of the so called "production works", especially as to roads and the conservative opposition of the covenanted civil service to all reforms — neither Viceroys nor Governors were able to oppose them".

T. V. Seshagiri Aiyer, well-known lawyer in his days, said in an article in *The Hindu* in 1923: "In its palmy days when the two proprietors worked amicably together, I was a fairly frequent contributor. Later on when bickerings became common and intrigues fomented quarrels, I was always called upon to settle differences between Subramania Aiyer and Veeraraghavachariar. When the situation demanded drastic remedies I and Mr. Norton arbitrated to settle the amount that should be paid by the one to the other and to effect the separation which could no longer be postponed"

In the palmy days referred to by Seshagiri Aiyer *The Hindu* office was a forum for public causes. It was visited by members of Parliament who passed through Madras and people with grievances thronged there so much so critics and those ill-disposed called it a "den of conspirators". Referring to this Veeraraghavachariar said: "Yes, they were conspirators consisting of eminent Government servants and leading lawyers and statesmen but they conspired

not for the overthrow of the Paramount Power but for the removal of abuses in the British administration”

Memorials and pamphlets on the various burning issues of the day were printed and circulated from The Hindu office. When the Congress met for the first time in Madras in 1887, leading Congressmen gathered in The Hindu office to discuss current topics of the day

Even while he was Editor of The Hindu, Subramania Aiyer had started a Tamil weekly, *Swadeshamitran*, which was a pioneer in Tamil journalism. After leaving The Hindu he devoted his full attention to the *Swadeshamitran* which he soon converted into a daily. He also took over as Editor of the *Madras Standard*, an English daily, while at the same time editing an economic weekly, the *United India*, started by him. Veeraraghavachariar also edited a Tamil bi-weekly, *Hindu Nesan*, while looking after The Hindu whose editorship was taken over by Karunakara Menon, who worked as Sub-Editor under Subramania Aiyer and acted as Editor when he was away in England.

The bad blood created between the late partners of The Hindu following the breaking of the partnership continued to mar their personal relations and Subramania Aiyer in his journals criticised some articles published in The Hindu. Veeraraghavachariar retaliated by replying in his paper in such a provocative manner that Subramania Aiyer filed a suit for defamation. Veeraraghavachariar was however persuaded to print an apology in *Hindu Nesan* by Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar, Legal Adviser to The Hindu, and the suit was withdrawn.

“**H**E WAS THE greatest journalist of his generation”, said C. Y. Chintamani, the Liberal leader and journalist, of G. Subramania Aiyer. Subramania Aiyer was a giant not only in Indian journalism but also a great social reformer whose revolutionary ideas were almost a century ahead of his times. He was a scholar whose learning and deep erudition and mastery of the English language brought a particular fragrance and attraction to the writings in *The Hindu* which were the envy of his contemporaries in this country. S. Sachidananda Sinha in a reference to *The Hindu* of the early years spoke of a humorous skit on English written by half-educated Indians called Babu English circulated at the Inns of Court, London when he was a law student there. In a preface the compiler, an Anglo-Indian journalist, made it clear that it would be a great mistake if the reader ran away with the impression that no Indian could write correct English and *The Hindu* was mentioned as not only one of the best written Indian journals but one which in its faultless writing could challenge comparison with even British journals. Sir William Wedderburn, “the hereditary servant of India”, as an Indian admirer called him, told Subramania Aiyer when he met him in London that *The Hindu* editorials could be compared to the best in *The Times* of London. A. O. Hume, “Father of the Indian National Congress” and a bosom friend of Subramania Aiyer, told him *The Hindu* was in great demand among members of Parliament for its editorials and he made arrangements for distribution of copies to them.

In a remarkable tribute to Subramania Aiyer, the *Leader* of Allahabad said: “He wielded a facile and powerful pen and the victims of the criticism winced under the strength of his argumentative blows. Withal, he was for the best part of his life a moderate politician. In his last years he perceptibly veered round to extremism as it then was. This could be explained by reference to several relevant circumstances. The foremost of them was, as it still is, and is becoming increasingly clear from year to year, if not almost from month to month — the accumulated disappointment of those who started with faith in British intentions but whom the logic of events has converted into sceptics. What a tribute to the British Government in India that it has almost uniformly driven its friends into the opponent’s camps?”

In the words of Sir Stanley Reed (his opposite number in *The Times* of India) Subramania Aiyer was a real journalist who “honestly and passionately

believed in the cause he advocated. The Hindu has always believed in its cause even at the cost of offending some of its friends"

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru once spoke of the inspiration they in the north looked forward to from the south when they were in college and "we used always to ask in the North in regard to any public issue that was raised in those days as to what was the opinion expressed in that great organ of public opinion called *The Hindu*".

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer said. "Massive in intellect as well as appearance, deeply read in history and politics, his articles were remarkable for their wealth of solid learning and his sarcasm and jokes were nearly as ponderous as his serious writings"

K. Natarajan of the Indian Social Reformer who worked under Subramania Aiyer in *The Hindu* for a long time spoke of his complete detachment from personal feeling and entire concentration on the merits of a subject in his editorials. "Friend or foe, it was all the same to him. While he sat in the Editorial chair he knew neither".

*The Hindu* which paid tributes to Subramania Aiyer on many occasions both while he was living and after his death described him as the "maker of Indian journalism in Madras Presidency". He helped to "foster political life among the masses and advance political education generally to a degree to which few others in the journalistic field or outside had till now succeeded in doing".

On another occasion *The Hindu* wrote: "For nearly 20 years during which he edited and controlled the policy of *The Hindu*, he not only acquired for the paper the solid reputation which it had then gained but familiarised his fellow countrymen with the fundamentals of organised political work so that it is the barest truth to say that in the moulding of public opinion in this province he had the lion's share".

Sir Henry Cotton, the veteran administrator, once told K. Subba Rao, Subramania Aiyer's colleague, in Calcutta: "I carefully keep a regular file of *The Hindu* and consult it regularly. If only all the Bengal papers were as considerate and as impartial as *The Hindu* then the administration of Bengal would be far easier".

G. Subramania Aiyer was a product of western education and culture and his whole attitude to Indian life was coloured by the materialist approach and that explained his intense devotion to reform of Hindu society. He admired English institutions and Englishmen. He said at a public lecture once that of late he had contracted a habit to look upon well-educated Englishmen "as so many object lessons to Hindus. Their spirit, their energy and their virtues are an example and a guide to us". He added when he compared the excellent system of western education with the system obtaining in India he felt greatly ashamed. When he studied other countries and their institutions and customs he always contrasted them with the corresponding institutions and customs obtaining in India and among us" and he felt discouraged.

He gave expression to his pessimism to his friends. He asked them "Do you think there is any hope for our country? I am afraid not. You see mighty national currents are against us. Our permanent home, according to the most cherished Hindu ideals, is not this world. We are merely temporary sojourners. Our final and blessed abode is the other world. Whereas in the case of Western nations this world is the summum bonum of life. They do not care



for what occurs after life. Their highest passion is to acquire all that is best in this world and to enjoy it while living. A day of success and glory is more important to them than all dreams of eternal salvation. Where is the strong motive power for us to work for political advancement with the same fervour and persistence as our brethren of the West? India is an object of antiquarian interest to the West. It is a museum of ancient world relics and barbarities and old fashioned customs. We are more objects of compassion than compeers who command respect and esteem in the eyes of the civilised world. My heart sinks within me often when I think of India and the uphill work of Himalayan magnitude which lies before us".

Asked if there was no hope for India, he replied: "There is only one source of hope. Though we are exceedingly poor in all essential respects in which the West maintains the whiphand, by divine grace one source of strength is yet left to us. God in his infinite mercy and wisdom has left us unimpaired after ages of suffering and servitude our intellect. Bring to India the best of representatives of the West from England, America and Germany. Give the Indians the same training, the same facilities and the same opportunity. The Indian will invariably hold his own in this world-wide competition as an administrator, as a judge, or as an engineer. There is no walk of life in which the Indian will fail to come up to the required level of excellence provided you give him equal opportunities. This is the only weapon we have at present for our national progress. On that I base all my hopes for the future".

What oppressed Subramania Aiyer's mind was the feeling that as long as Hindu society hugged to its bosom the past without being fully alive to the necessities of the present it was doomed to eternal disappointment as it could never keep pace in the race of the world. He did not agree that the past exhausted all our greatness. He thought that "an abiding hope in the future — a hope which will day and night whisper success and glory in our ears — was essential to inspire us with the necessary courage and supply the sustaining power for action for long periods without our being baffled and discouraged by obstacles and failures".

Subramania Aiyer put forward his views with greater emphasis and clarity when speaking during the silver jubilee celebrations of *The Hindu* in 1903 he called upon the Indian Press "not to shut its eyes to the insidious and pernicious influence of the spirit of reaction that seems to be passing at present over the country and be misguided by the delusions of a spurious patriotism. Let us not ignore the changed conditions under which the country is passing. Let us remember that no community that has survived a certain stage of its growth, can go back and live it again any more than an old man can reacquire and live again his childhood. The nation lives for the future and not so much for the past although I do not ignore the historical continuity between the past and the future. The educated countrymen of mine who support the Press and other exponents of public opinion should bear this fact in their mind that the past is not so important as the future. Therefore I pray and wish that *The Hindu* will not swerve from the policy it has always followed from its commencement and will advocate and champion progress not only in regard to our political conditions but also along all lines of social and material advancement. Change, reform and progress constitute the life of a nation, whereas blind and thoughtless conservation lead to stagnation and eventual ruin"

What offended Subramania Aiyer most in the then Hindu way of life was its treatment of women; the child marriages, perpetuation of child widows, and the confinement of women to the home without giving them education and freedom, treatment of Pariahs (or Harijans as they are now called) and the rigours of the caste system. And what brought the Hindu orthodoxy down on him was precisely the passionate concern he expressed for the fate of the child widows, child wives and illiterate women and his dedicated service to remove these evils. He felt it his duty as a journalist to rouse the conscience of the Hindu intelligentsia and the educated community generally to the wrongs and oppression that were being perpetuated in the name of custom which would lead to the inevitable destruction of Hindu society. Day after day he wrote in the columns of his paper, organised public meetings in Madras and other centres of the Madras Presidency and set a personal example by celebrating the marriage of his widowed daughter. He wrote and spoke of the condition of women in the West, their freedom and education and asked why their sisters and daughters in India should be imprisoned in their homes.

When Dr. Annie Besant came to Madras in 1893 on her mission to popularise theosophy and incidentally condemned western civilisation and extolled the virtues of Hinduism, The Hindu took cudgels against her. "We must decline to concur in Mrs. Besant's wholesale condemnations of Western civilisation", it said. "Mrs. Besant has of course greater authority to speak on this subject than we can pretend to have but if nothing else, Western civilisation is superior to that of the East in being able to produce women of the culture and capacity and courage of conviction which have made Mrs. Besant and many others of her sex a power for good in their land and other lands. Hindu civilisation is yet to produce a woman of the stamp of the talented lady who held her audience spellbound for 70 minutes yesterday at the Victoria Hall and until it does produce such a one, we for our part cannot appropriate for Hinduism the praises which Mrs. Besant so generously lavished on our ancestors. A tree is judged by its fruits and we are unable to see that in any dispensation it can be consonant with the eternal justice or fitness of things that one half of the human race should be condemned to a perpetual life of drudgery and mental darkness".

In his crusade against child marriages and for remarriage of widows Subramania Aiyer had the vigorous and sustained support of T. Raghunatha Row who quoted chapter and verse from the Hindu scriptures to show that they did not sanction these evil practices. Together they organised a Hindu reform association and canvassed among new Hindu graduates bridegrooms for Hindu widows. They launched a boycott of child marriages and Subramania Aiyer freely gave space and publicity in the columns of The Hindu for the campaign.

Subramania Aiyer's disgust and distaste for the nautch girls was no less intense and virulent. Either he was ignorant of the dance art which the nautch girls were supposed to practise or he considered it as less important than the fact that in the name of art girls were selling their bodies and disgracing themselves in public. In his campaign against nautch parties he did not spare the highest official in the land and did not hesitate to castigate officials and non-officials openly for patronising nautch parties in the privacy of their homes.

He was a man who was easily moved by suffering and privation and it was the pitiable condition of the Pariahs, the social outcasts of Hindu society, which made him suggest in *The Hindu* that the Christian Missionaries should be allowed to take them over to their religion and protect them for there seemed no reasonable hope of their ever being able to come up and assert their rights as part of Hindu society. But he quickly recovered from this momentary outburst and a few days later *The Hindu* advised the Pariahs not to be misled by the missionaries but fight their battle against caste Hindus with patience and courage.

Subramania Aiyer, it is true, did not achieve everything that he fought for in the social field but he did create a great stir in Hindu society and when others came on the scene after him, notably Mahatma Gandhi, it was easier for them to spread the message of love and equality among the Hindus. And today the Indian Constitution enshrines all the principles for social reform for which Subramania Aiyer fought through the columns of *The Hindu* so fearlessly and incessantly.

We have already indicated in earlier pages that Subramania Aiyer was one of those who believed in the permanence of the British connection (this, however, was to change at the fag end of his life) and his loyalty to the British throne was unquestioned and unassailable. Nor did Subramania Aiyer in the early days aspire for his country representative institutions of the kind existing in the Mother of Parliaments and in the British colonies. He was satisfied if the natives (Subramania Aiyer used this word in preference to "Indians" for no apparent reason) were given a voice in the legislative organs to ask questions and to influence Government's policy to the extent possible. He wanted more of his countrymen appointed to high executive and judicial posts and he was so overjoyed when an Indian was appointed a judge of a High Court or nominated to the Legislative Council that he wrote a whole column or two in his paper praising and thanking the imperial Government and eulogising the qualities of the lucky Indians. But Subramania Aiyer was stern in demanding that officials, be they European or Indian, should discharge their duties impartially, efficiently and with sympathy. He explained his views in an interview in these words:

"My policy is one of the utmost friendliness to Britons, sincere admiration for all the virile manly virtues of the British race, an absolutely impartial policy of commendation and condemnation according to their merits and defects in administration. I entertain no racial bias in my judgement of men and measures. An English officer and an Indian officer are the same to me. I shall criticise them without any difference as their actions are good or bad. At the same time I wish I were always able to be as aloof in India from Englishmen in power as possible so that I may not by degrees and almost unconsciously surrender my judgement to their decision or make myself liable to the charge of ingratitude." There were many Governors and district administrators who after coming in for severe treatment in the columns of *The Hindu* were glad to find appreciative references in the same paper prior to their departure from India and desired to take with them a number of copies of that special issue.

Subramania Aiyer had been accused of harshness and undue severity of judgement on men and matters in his writings. It is true that where an error was committed by Government or an official had been responsible for lapses

in manners and judgment or official powers had been abused or misused Subramania Aiyer did not mince words, nor did he spare the victim however high placed he may be and we need quote only the example of Governor Grant Duff. But equally should it be mentioned that Subramania Aiyer threw in all the superlative encomiums in his armoury to praise to the skies some of the great British administrators and the finest example is that of Lord Ripon who in the sheer number of words used to extol him in the pages of *The Hindu* must have created an all-time record.

Subramania Aiyer had an unconventional way of not sparing even the dead in mentioning their faults along with their virtues in the obituary notices. We gave one example in which his victim was a judicial officer. His defence of this practice was: "I want to impress on my countrymen, high and low, that whenever a man's career or conduct runs counter to national interest, he can expect no mercy from us however high he may be. When a man dies we can review his work fully. The dead do not care what we write. Let the living take a lesson from our policy. Let both young and old, who like to leave a good name behind them, never forget their sacred obligation to the motherland. Let all feel that even when they die their defects — if they injure the national cause and national self-respect — will not be forgiven. The feelings of the near and dear ones are as nothing to me when compared with the permanent injury to the national interest which some of our men have permanently and consciously done, either for their own advancement or for fear of wounding the delicate and divine susceptibilities of the members of Government"

The greatest gift to India which Subramania Aiyer and the political leaders of his generation gave was the Indian National Congress. *The Hindu* was one of the midwives who delivered the Congress to the nation and Subramania Aiyer was an inseparable part of it till his death. He said of the Congress: "If the Congress has done nothing else for which it has won a permanent place in the modern history of India, it has atleast enabled the Indian people to discover their great men and cherish them as their most precious possession. It has taught the Indian people the greatest of any lesson that a people can learn—the lesson of self-respect. It has besides succeeded in imparting to our rulers an idea of the full moral and intellectual capacity of our race whom they no longer recognise as a multitude of semi-civilised incoherent atoms, but whom they must respect and conciliate. The Indian National Congress, finally, is the one living emblem and proof of the unity of India and the hope and guarantee of the future"

An article of faith with Subramania Aiyer as it was with his Indian political contemporaries was the innate goodwill of the British Parliament towards India. This faith was so firmly rooted that *The Hindu* at one stage suggested that India should elect a certain quota of members directly to the British Parliament so that they might represent the country's interests in the highest Imperial legislature. *The Hindu* also again and again suggested that the British Parliament should directly take over the administration of India, eliminating the Viceroy and the India Office. It was a time when India had in Parliament a large number of Liberal friends, like Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. William Caine and Mr. Charles Bradlaugh whose support and guidance Subramania Aiyer assiduously cultivated through the columns of *The Hindu*.

When Dadabhai Naoroji was elected to the British House of Commons, The Hindu welcomed his victory as a "singular monument to the splendid elasticity of the British constitution, the generous instincts of the Englishmen and of the liberal sentiments unparalleled in the history of any other imperial nation which animate Britain's rule of this country. Such a thing is possible only in England. The tie that binds India to her ruling country is no longer the mere sentiment of loyalty, ever so genuine and profound but is the real constitutional equality attested by the actual presence of an Indian member in the Imperial Council"

Delegations of Congress were frequently sent to London for contacts with members of Parliament and the ordinary people of England. The London Correspondent's fortnightly letters were a mine of information on the state of feeling among members of Parliament on Indian questions, on discussions in Parliament on India, what the Press said about India and what the British public thought about India. The London letters were given the pride of place in the leader page and sometimes they were used as editorial articles. The London letters were supplemented with copious extracts from the English Press so much so The Hindu reader knew more about what was happening in England than in his own country

The Hindu along with other Indian leaders had enormous confidence in the British Liberal Party and its leader Gladstone. William Digby, Agent of the Congress in London and also believed to be The Hindu Correspondent, met Gladstone and informed him of the activities of the National Congress. The interview was published in full in The Hindu. The Hindu announced the death of Gladstone in May, 1898, in a black bordered editorial (which was perhaps one of the last to be written by Subramania Aiyer) in which Gladstone was described "as the last great Englishman", the keynote of whose career was "hatred of oppression and wrong". The Hindu said: "The jingo imperialism which has taken hold of the English people, blinding them to the justice and generosity due to subject races like the Indian people had no more determined enemy than Mr. Gladstone. He it was that sent us Lord Ripon to reverse that fatuous frontier policy of Lord Lytton, to replace the Press Gag Act, to sow the seeds of local self-Government in this country. True it is that even he was not able to do much for India; but had he been at the helm of affairs it is impossible to believe that not only in India but in other parts of the Empire matters would have been allowed to drift as they have been drifting. More than this, we do not see among English statesmen any one possessed of the creative genius of Mr. Gladstone. The English race has produced many great men, but none who combined practical statesmanship with high moral qualities as he".

Subramania Aiyer had good correspondents in key centres in North India like Calcutta, Bombay, Poona and Delhi who sent regular and accurate reports of happenings in their parts of the country. They were not journalists in the strict sense of the term; they were politicians who turned their hand to writing at fair intervals and at least one of them was the well-known Bepin Chandra Pal of Calcutta. In South India Subramania Aiyer had a man at all important towns and cities and at the state capitals of Hyderabad, Travancore and Mysore. A feature of The Hindu in its early formative years was the amount of district news of quality it supplied and these mofussil correspondents, who mostly functioned in an honorary capacity and for the love of the work, were not only the

eyes and ears of the Editor but also proved a great source of information to the Government itself. Many cases of gross abuse of power by petty and high ranking officials and harassment of the people by arrogant civilians and the distress of the citizens were exposed through these mofussil newsletters and Government had to take notice of them.

A notable correspondent of *The Hindu* was Saligram Subba Rao who was stationed in Bangalore and covered Mysore State. He was an intimate friend of Subramania Aiyer and a talented lawyer of the Mysore Chief Court. A Mysorean by birth and instinct, Subba Rao was an admirer and friend of all Indians in whom there was merit. Through his contributions to *The Hindu*, he helped to form sound public opinion in Mysore. An admirer of Subba Rao writes of him: "His independence of judgment and his faith in moderate presentation of his views in the Press extorted great admiration".

Subramania Aiyer did not flinch from doing his duty if it was in the public interest and an example of it was when he espoused the cause of a popular European official who was suspended on trumped up charges. He sent a special reporter, K. Subba Rao, to cover the inquiry. Although the inquiry was held in camera Subba Rao managed to send exhaustive reports of the proceedings to the considerable annoyance of the authorities who could not trace the source of his information. The reports were carried in *The Hindu* and when ultimately the official, Mr. Crole, Collector of Madurai, was acquitted it was because of the public opinion created by *The Hindu*.

Subramania Aiyer realised the importance of the Princes in the economy of India and their hoary traditions and fully sympathised with their claim for prosperity untrammelled by extraneous restrictions. The columns of *The Hindu* were thrown open to news and views from the princely states and the internal policies and even intrigues received full publicity. He gave the people of the states his hearty and ready support in their desire for raising their states to the level of British India in regard to freedom of thought and expression and the introduction of constitutional restraints to control expenditure and to give representatives of the people a real share in the administration of their affairs. He had many rulers and Dewans of states among his friends and he was particularly popular in Travancore where during a visit he was treated as a royal guest. He saw the irony of the situation in that while Indians were acquitting themselves remarkably well as administrators of princely states they were not considered worthy to occupy similar positions in British India. He told K. Subba Rao of the case of S. Srinivasaraghava Iyengar, brother of S. Kasturiranga Iyengar (who later purchased *The Hindu*), Dewan of Baroda. Srinivasaraghava Iyengar was a Madras Government official and occupied the post of Inspector-General of Registration when he was chosen as Dewan of Baroda. Subramania Aiyer said while he was happy about the appointment of Iyengar it made him sad to think that "it is the perversity of British statesmanship that compels one of our best men to go all the way from Madras to Baroda. If he is fit to be Dewan of Baroda, is he incompetent to be a member of the Board of Revenue, or a member of the Governor's Executive Council? Why not the British Government raise him to such a position? Are we to beg for preference from native princes after having slaved lifelong for the British Government?"

Subramania Aiyer was asked by K. Vyasa Rao how non-Hindu patrons of The Hindu like Humayun Jha Bahadur and William Pillai approved the name of the paper as "Hindu". He replied, "Why, they all considered it the best name because it expressed the national sentiment best" (On this question N. Subba Rao one of the founders of The Hindu said: "After much discussion about the name we adopted it as the most appropriate").

Subramania Aiyer was a strict disciplinarian but he did not minimise his own sense of responsibility. He did not mince matters when things went wrong but he never took undue advantage of the errors and mistakes of his subordinates or fellow workers merely because he was in authority over them. There is the story of an Assistant Editor who told by a reliable friend that some important official had passed away published the obituary. The next day the "dead" man saw the Editor and told him the news could not be true. Subramania Aiyer had a hearty laugh, called the offending Assistant Editor and asked him to be careful in future. Subba Rao described how he puzzled his friends by his varying moods and temperament. "His generally impersonal nature at times led him to meet his acquaintances with a smiling face in the morning or evening and to shake hands heartily, while at noon he thundered vociferously in his columns in the loudest tones against their public actions or views. They wondered how they could rely on him. They scarcely realised his unpleasant duties and how as an Editor he would have no friend or foe in his public utterances except what he was led to say in the light of their own doings".

He did very little by way of training his assistants. K. Natarajan, who served under him before he took over as Editor of Indian Social Reformer, said in an article in The Hindu: "He never told me what I should write about or how. I do not remember any occasion except two when any reference was made by him to what I had written. He was not given to praising his staff, not that he was wanting in appreciation but he knew the staff did not need praise. Once he said not so much to me as in my hearing that The Hindu editorial paragraphs were spoken of as rivalling those of the *Pioneer*, it being then reputed as the foremost Indian journal. What we learnt from him was however of great value". Subramania Aiyer did make an exception of Karunakara Menon, who acted as Editor while he was away in England, when on his return he congratulated him on his excellent editorials which he said were "spoken of highly everywhere".

Karunakara Menon, who spoke at a memorial meeting in Madras in 1916 on the death of Subramania Aiyer, paid this tribute to his master and guru: "In our younger days we felt a thrill as we read the articles in The Hindu. If the whole world said one thing and The Hindu said the opposite we believed The Hindu, we sided with The Hindu and we followed The Hindu".

For nearly ten years the name of Subramania Aiyer was not to be found in the columns of The Hindu after he severed his connection with it in 1898 and when it did reappear in May, 1907 in the wake of the Punjab arrests and deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai it was a Subramania Aiyer who had changed beyond recognition. It was a political metamorphosis as it were. The iron had entered his soul and his faith in the British Government and hope of getting justice for his people through petitions and memorials were rudely shattered. He no longer believed the British intended to play fair with India and he envisaged a

struggle if freedom was to be attained. The change in his front was so sudden and sweeping that many thought he had turned an extremist and perhaps this was the reason for the Government's action against him, in the following year. But he was not an extremist by any means. As the Leader of Allahabad remarked it was the explosion of accumulated disappointments and frustrations over long years. It was as a disappointed and disillusioned friend of Britain that Subramania Aiyer wrote to *The Hindu* in May, 1907, condemning the Government for its action against Lala Lajpat Rai. "The boasted freedom of British rule in India now stands exposed in its horrid nakedness", he wrote. "Mr. Morley (Secretary of State for India) and Lord Minto (Viceroy), British statesmen, fully saturated by the spirit and tradition of the British nation, have sacrificed one of our most trusted and high souled leaders for the bloodthirstiness of the Anglo-Indians. In other countries successful agitators are patriots and are honoured by posterity. In India agitators are rebels and deserved incarceration or deportation." Subramania Aiyer went on to observe that the old methods of petitioning and praying had failed to yield results and no longer served the purpose. "Our protests and our memorials and other jejune devices will help us in no way. They will simply be ignored as they have been ignored till now ever since the establishment of British Rule. The British rulers of India will not easily part with such a simple and so effective a weapon (Regulation III of 1818 under which Lajpat Rai was arrested and deported) and that Indian must be a deluded simpleton who believes that memorials to Parliament or interpellations by our British friends will lead to any such result. It might have been possible in former times when the people were uneducated and had not acquired consciousness of a nationality and were incapable of concerted action. Now in the face of the changed attitude of the people, the bureaucracy will grasp more closely than ever every power it can arrogate to itself by virtue of its unrestrained despotism and will be constantly incited against us by the growing class of unscrupulous fortune hunters infesting our land".

There was no mistaking the aggressive tone of Subramania Aiyer in this letter and the bitterness and anger pervading it. This was confirmed when Subramania Aiyer supported a proposal for boycott of British goods as a political weapon at the Vizagapatam Political Conference in which his opponents were V. Krishnaswami Aiyer and N. Subba Rao. *The Hindu* criticised the opposition to the proposal and Subramania Aiyer in a letter to the Editor said: "Those that boycott British goods will not necessarily hate British people or show anger towards them. They will not be actuated by an active desire to injure them or cause them loss or suffering. They would simply abstain from purchasing or using British goods or offering encouragement or support to any kind of British enterprise or to any effort that will tend to their benefit. This may provoke hatred and anger in certain minds. But they are there even now without boycott. The question will arise, even in this sense, is boycott a feasible or a desirable weapon in obtaining redress for our grievances and wresting political equality from our rulers? It is not desirable of course. If the British rulers have not heaped on us wrongs and injuries, disabilities and insults, if they have not gone on pressing on us conditions of political slavery from day to day, if they have not exasperated the popular feeling by studiously ignoring our representations and persisting in oppressive measures merely



for the reason of our protesting against them, with a view to uphold their prestige, if they have left us the least ground for hope that they will spontaneously or in response to our demands, grant us freedom and equality, then the idea of retaliation or passive resistance by a system of boycott would not have suggested itself to our people"

Subramania Aiyer went on a lecture tour of the South later that year and wherever he went he found enthusiastic audiences who braved official displeasure and harassment to listen and cheer him. Describing a meeting in Tenkasi, a correspondent wrote from Ambasamudram: "Despite the active obstruction of the local Tahsildar, who went out of his way to prevent the prominent citizens of Tenkasi from attending the meeting, the people of Tenkasi, 500 in number, went to escort Mr. Subramania Aiyer to the place of meeting with band and flags and the attendance at the meeting was large. The people manifested their enthusiasm with occasional shouts of "Bande Mataram"

Subramania Aiyer's transformation was so rapid and radical that even The Hindu had to part company with him when he urged the giving up of titles and honorary offices under the British Government (incidentally, these two were part of the non-co-operation programme launched by Gandhiji in 1921). Subramania Aiyer had made this suggestion at the North Arcot District Political Conference. The Hindu referring to the suggestion for giving up honorary posts said: "We regret we are unable to agree with this view. Boycott of honorary offices, in our opinion, stands upon an entirely different footing from that of foreign goods. The latter can well be sustained upon economic considerations and for the economic well being of the community. It implies no necessary antagonism with the Government. Englishmen who rule the country may find it hard to forgive those who successfully steer the boycott movement because it affects injuriously the trade and profits of their countrymen but the Government as such can lay no embargo upon the movement, for all its subjects, whether British merchants or Indian citizens, are equal in its eyes and in the eye of the law. But honorary offices whether on Municipalities, District Boards, or Legislative Councils are intended to secure the good of the community and however restricted may be the scope it seems to us that it will be an unjustifiable throwing away of the opportunity of doing service to the community to decline to take up honorary offices. It has also to be remembered that honorary functions attached to these offices are valuable instruments of political education of the people"

G Subramania Aiyer was arrested on a charge of sedition in Courtallam where he had gone to recoup his health, on August 21, 1908. The charge of sedition was based on some articles written in the Swadeshamitran. The same day the office of the Swadeshamitran in Armenian Street, Georgetown, Madras, was searched on a warrant issued by the Chief Presidency Magistrate. Subramania Aiyer's house in Triplicane was also searched. Subramania Aiyer was brought to Tenkasi police station from Courtallam and kept there till the morning when he boarded a train for Madras.

The Hindu called the action of the Madras Government a "step of the utmost gravity". It declared that Subramania Aiyer was fully entitled to "all possible indulgence and forbearance on the part of the Government by reason of his past public record, the enormous hold which he has as a public man upon the

affection and esteem of his fellow countrymen, his age and his bodily health which is admittedly bad and is such as to call for universal sympathy”

The Hindu after detailing the services of Subramania Aiyer to the country and his abiding loyalty to the British administration said: “That his views did not undergo any substantial transformation is shown by the fact that in the last Congress at Surat he threw in his lot with the conventionalists and gave his support to the creed and constitution framed by Sir P. Mehta, Mr Gokhale and others of the party”

A bail application moved on behalf of Subramania Aiyer before the Madras High Court and heard by the Chief Justice, Sir Charles Arnold, was dismissed and Subramania Aiyer was removed to the Penitentiary. The case against Subramania Aiyer before the Chief Presidency Magistrate was however withdrawn on September 5, 1908 on an application by the Crown Prosecutor, Nugent Grant who said he was withdrawing the case under instructions from Government. The step was taken, he said, in view of Subramania Aiyer's health and his age and in view of the undertaking given by him that he would abstain in future from public speaking or writing or from any action which might tend to excite class hatred or promote sedition or disloyalty to Government. Subramania Aiyer was released on his furnishing a bond for Rs 5,000 and two sureties for Rs 2,500 each to be of good behaviour for one year

The Hindu was happy Subramania Aiyer had been released and praised the Madras Government who “are entitled to the deepest gratitude of the Indian community for their most sympathetic and generous action in the matter” The Hindu said: “It is not often that we see the British Government in the country retracing a step once taken or admitting an error of judgment in having taken a particular course of action. In the present instance far from the prestige of Government having been lowered by the humanitarian impulse which has dictated their action, we think all people will agree that the Government have increased a thousand fold their claim to the respect and confidence of the people by the timely measure which they have taken. It is all the more gratifying to us to make this acknowledgement of what is due to the Government in as much as immediately after the arrest of Mr Subramania Aiyer for sedition became known, we pointed out in a leading article on the subject that Mr Subramania Aiyer was fully entitled to the indulgence and forbearance of the Government by reason of various circumstances and that action by way of warning or under section 108 C.R.P.C. would be a suitable first step. We do not know whether the Government are aware of the degree of shock to the public feeling and to the goodwill of the public towards the Government which was the result when the news of his prosecution became known. We cannot help thinking that the Government when they resolved upon prosecuting Mr. Subramania Aiyer vastly underestimated the hold which a public man of his standing, abilities and lifelong service has acquired upon the conscience of the people. A closer touch than that now existing between the responsible officers of Government and genuine leaders of public opinion would avert much misapprehension and is to be wished for from every point of view”

The Hindu criticised the High Court for refusing to release Subramania Aiyer on bail. “If regard for the actual state of his health was of such potency as to

induce the local Government to abandon the prosecution, surely it ought to have been sufficient to ensure his being let on bail. By this we do not mean to say that there were not — we think there were — other considerations and grounds upon the strength of which Mr. Subramania Aiyer was entitled to be on bail. The learned Chief Justice however treated the application for bail made to him and pressed with much earnestness and force by Mr. T. Rangachariar in an offhand and summary manner and as if granting of bail was a matter of grace by a judge and not a right of the accused to be granted on suitable grounds shown. The effect of the refusal of bail has been to detain Mr. Subramania Aiyer in custody for two weeks”.

Subramania Aiyer was not the same man after this experience which included a short stay in prison. He never completely recovered his health and his condition was aggravated by the fact that he was afflicted with leprosy. Although he continued to write editorials for the *Swadeshamitran* the old fire in him was gone and he was a mere caricature of his former indomitable spirit. He was not happy about the undertaking, which *The Hindu* on a later occasion called, “humiliating”, which he was forced to give to secure his release.

A correspondent wrote to *The Hindu* shortly after Subramania Aiyer's release: “Immediately after his release I had been to see him. Then he said: ‘The world may misunderstand me. You know how helpless I am in my house having to depend upon the ministrations of half a dozen persons. If Sir Arthur Lawley's Government could have guaranteed that hanging would be the punishment I would have faced the trial with great cheer and a sense of great relief. At this age and with this physical constitution how could I endure the discipline of hard labour?’ That was his defence against the attack made on him by men far less worthy,” the correspondent added.

Subramania Aiyer was a lonely man now. Sivapriya, his eldest daughter, a widow in early age, whom he got married in the face of social ostracism and who looked after him after the death of her mother, had passed away in 1899 when she was only 22. An obituary tribute to her in *The Hindu* had said. “Sivapriya was devoted to her father of whose stupendous sacrifice for her during the last 10 years she had the keenest and most loving sense”.

K. Vyasa Rao after visiting Subramania Aiyer wrote: “When I saw him a few weeks back in the gathering gloom of a late evening as he was seated intensely listening to something that was being read out to him, he appeared to me the picture of the unvanquishable human will. His eyesight was so poor that he could hardly make out any one who stood before him but he had the clearest vision of the most complicated problems of Indian and world politics and he said, as the most ordinary thing that he could have told me, that he was dictating two leading articles every morning to the *Swadeshamitran*” Vyasa Rao was moved by the strength of mind and will which animated his wasting body.

In a letter to *The Hindu* in December, 1914, from Pondicherry Subramania Bharati said: “There is hope for Madras for she has still some veteran leaders of the calibre of Mr. Subramania Aiyer. Mr. Aiyer is a patriot of the orthodox type, midway between the fanatic and the funk. For the last three decades and more this man has been unceasingly thinking and writing about his country, her wrongs and her hopes. The dazzling brilliance of genius Mr. Aiyer certainly has not. The gods have not bestowed on him any of those shining, semi-divine

mental gifts. But they have mercifully withheld from his composition the cheap and deceitful flashes so painfully common among us in these latter days—the spurious, multi-coloured and short-lived flames of the political dilettante and charlatan. He is not a star, nor a meteor, nor *ignis fatuus*. He is the unfailing sacrificial fire; a modest beacon light over the troubled waters of Indian politics. The gods have given him plenty of suffering as they give to every mortal on earth. Perhaps the gods decree more suffering to men who wish to help human evolution than to others. But to Mr. Subramania Aiyer they have granted the strength to bear all the burden and heat of the day, never complaining, never despairing. This man can endure, he can therefore build. He can suffer, he can therefore elevate. Unaided he has made Tamil journalism a fact of the world in spite of his very imperfect early training in Tamil literature. Learn, says the Tamil aphorist, while you are yet young. In Mr. Subramania Aiyer's youth he had wholly neglected his mother tongue like most people in this country who claim to have been "educated" in English schools. But his mature patriotism had to realise later on that for the elevation of the Tamil race the Tamil language would be not only the most rational but the indispensable medium. They win who dare, Mr. Aiyer dared and he has succeeded in establishing a Tamil daily journal which with all its faults is the most useful newspaper in the Tamil country. His whole political gospel can be summed up in these words: 'Peaceful but tireless and unceasing effort'. Let us sweat ourselves into Swaraj, he would seem to say."

Mahatma Gandhi called on Subramania Aiyer in April, 1915 when he was lying seriously ill. The Mahatma was accompanied by V S Srinivasa Sastri who later described the interview as "one generation bidding farewell to another". Subramania Aiyer broke down when he told Gandhiji that he was not able to continue his public service. Gandhiji wiped away his tears with his own hand and said he had done more than his share of work for India and that he should now rest and nurse his body and that it was the turn of others to work.

The heroic soul passed away on April 18, 1916 after a period of suffering and agony patiently borne. He was 61. The Hindu mourned a "veteran journalist and versatile patriot of southern India". Among the distinguished sons of this country who have borne the heat and burden of the regeneration of modern India", it said, "there is no name more worthy to be honoured and remembered than Mr. G. Subramania Aiyer. He has been in the forefront of the ranks of those who have laboured long and strenuously to win for the people of this country their due share of political, economic and social progress. A man of indomitable courage, strong public spirit, unceasing energy, gifted with talents of a high order and a burning zeal for the uplift of his countrymen, Mr. Subramania Aiyer was when at the meridian of his powers, a great national force and the impulses to national advancement which he stimulated were varied and of permanent value. Mr. Subramania Aiyer was one of the pioneers of journalistic enterprise in South India, having started *The Hindu* with some other gentlemen and made it, by means of his virile pen an organ of commanding influence, radiating light and infusing spirit among the people of all classes".

The Hindu said: "Mr. Subramania Aiyer in all his varied activities never faltered in acting to the full measure of his convictions. His temperament was not such as is characterised by a celebrated man and what is only too common

among our countrymen, to be "an innoxious and ineffectual character that seems formed upon a plan of apology and disculpation, falling miserably short of the mark of public duty" He was on the other hand an example of a man who feels that "public duty demands and requires that what is right should not only be made known but made prevalent, that what is evil should not only be detected but defeated"

A reader who claimed close association with *The Hindu* during the period Subramania Aiyer was its Editor wrote "To know him was to love him. He was a unique personality in whom the qualities of the head and heart were so harmoniously blended At a time when Madras was steeped in self-aggrandisement, toadyism and narrow minded vapoury intellectuality, Mr Subramania Aiyer and his half a dozen colleagues bravely held aloft the torch of Indian nationalism They were undoubtedly our political prophets very much in advance of their generation. To the end of his life Subramania Aiyer lived for his country and Madras is much poorer for his loss But the seed which he sowed and nurtured is not only living but has lustily sprouted and before long that Madras will be in the vanguard of the provinces of India in patriotism, public spirit and self-sacrifice is undoubted"

C Y Chintamani, Editor of *Leader*, wrote "Mr Subramania Aiyer's name will live in the annals of Indian journalism and Indian public life as that of an eminent man who was untiring in the service of the motherland and who brought to that service the qualities of ability and industry, courage, persistence, faith and determination".

When Subramania Aiyer started his career as a school-master in his twenties no one would have thought that journalism would claim him so soon and push him to the pinnacle of glory He was cut out for an ideal teacher and he developed a passion for education He felt that education should be given to all irrespective of caste or creed or social status With this in view he started a High School of his own in Triplicane in 1888 to which were admitted non-caste Hindus and Muslims. He named it the Aryan High School He also arranged for a night school to be run for those who could not attend day schools The Aryan High School was later handed over to a Christian Mission and became the Kellett High School when Subramania Aiyer found his journalistic preoccupations too heavy to devote time to the school His thoughts ran to politics and journalism following his active participation in the activities of the Triplicane Literary Society which was the premier forum in Madras for discussion of issues concerning the people and the Government. Subramania Aiyer sent letters to *The Madras Mail* on political topics and they were published. This gave him a measure of self-confidence and when he and his friends decided to start a journal of their own there was no doubt among them who should edit it and bear the main responsibility Subramania Aiyer had little or no guidance in his new profession except what he learnt from the Anglo-Indian Press but he made a path for himself and learnt very quickly.

Karunakara Menon, his able lieutenant and successor, wrote "The writing in *The Hindu* in those days betrayed the inexperience of those who wrote them The style was often rugged and clumsy. The ideas were immature The attack on men and matters were far from refined. Subramania Aiyer gradually raised the standard of writing as he gained experience. With *The Hindu* grew public opinion in Madras. It was *The Hindu* that set the tone of public life, that

imparted life and vigour to it and of The Hindu Subramania Aiyer was the inspirer and guide"

Subramania Aiyer was the father of public opinion in South India and he was also one of the fathers of Indian Nationalism. Very early from his seat in the Editorial chair he came to the conclusion that it was one of the most sacred and solemn duties of an Indian journalist to lead public opinion and mould it on the lines best suited for the immediate needs of the country. He gave meaning and depth to the word patriotism and he taught his people through the medium of his paper not to be cowed down by the white man, not to be afraid of him but to fight for their rights and speak out against abuse of power. In his own life and in his writings he set an example by unflinching opposition and fearless exposure of administration's misdeeds and to him a Viceroy or a Governor who committed a mistake was no higher than a Tahsildar or sub-magistrate who might be guilty of doing wrong. He criticised both with equal vehemence and fairness. He was no respecter of persons, high or low and he bowed his head only to God and his sovereign, who in the early stage of his career, was to him almost akin to God.

He was a glutton for work. To him work was religion. He did not waste a minute in idle talk or chatter and he did not want others also to waste time. He was a fine example of the saying that the busiest man has the greatest leisure. The lazy and idle habits of some of his countrymen pained him and he again and again called upon them, through The Hindu, to wake up and work. As revealed by Vyasa Rao in an earlier page he worked almost to the last minute of his life although his bodily ailment could not have permitted him to do so. He was concerned over the absence of industries in the South and raised a National Industrial Fund in Madras in 1905 to help promising entrepreneurs and send bright boys to England for scientific and technical training.

Amidst the rush and worry of a daily newspaper he found time to write books more or less of permanent value. His "Short History of Japan" was a new and welcome departure in Tamil literature. Another book of his was "Some economic aspects of British rule in India".

As a speaker he deservedly held a high place. He was no orator, but he spoke with vigour and to the point. His speeches lacked literary finish or polished verbiage but they had the ring of sincerity which is the secret of all successful speaking. His ideal of a journalist did not admit any varnishing of facts but no one was more open to conviction than he. "If he had only stooped to play to the gallery", said one admirer, "or flatter those who are in power he would be today much better off from a worldly point of view. But he would not care to sport a blue ribbon or boast of a fat account in the bank by stifling his conscience. For all that he is a god-fearing man with a touching devotion to his family and friends"

He shocked Hindu society by his unorthodox, unconventional and radical opinions and set in motion a great movement for social reform. For over 20 years The Hindu fought through his powerful and persistent pen the citadel of orthodoxy and although it did not break it, it did make dents which were turned into big openings by later day reformers. He himself was faced with social sanctions for his daring and it was said his daughter's father-in-law would not receive him inside his house because of his "unHindu" practices. But he braved them all, social and political persecution, because he had a mission in

life and a tool with which to achieve it. Was he a greater social reformer than a patriot? It is difficult to judge. For him both social reform and political emancipation went hand in hand and the one could not be sacrificed for the other. The Congress did not go fully with him on this and some say his extreme views on social reform were responsible for denying him the presidency of the Indian National Congress (of which he was one of the founding fathers) which he if any one did, so richly deserved by his service and sacrifice.

He became more and more lonely as he neared his end. With the death of his wife and his eldest daughter, who made history and who kept house for him, he became father and mother to his other children, two daughters and a son and he was so solicitous of their welfare that he would not allow any one else to look after them. Short in stature and round in face with a tuft, he was an intensely religious man for all his unorthodoxy. He did his puja regularly in the morning and read the Ramayana and the Kural. He was a man of disciplined habits with efficiency as his watchword. In his later days he went to Bangalore for summer and stayed with V P. Madhava Rao, Dewan. He liked Bangalore so much that he bought a house-site to live there after retirement.

He was a familiar figure on the Madras Marina in the evenings when he was driven in a rickshaw for a fresh breath of air, the Marina which was laid out by his arch enemy, Governor Grant Duff and which he so much admired and wanted to be protected from misuse that he wrote a stinging editorial when he spotted an Indian lawyer urinating on the flower-beds.

In a remarkable speech at the silver jubilee celebrations of The Hindu in 1903, he said: "I rejoice that the little seed which I along with others planted 25 years ago had germinated, grown and expanded into a tree which now I am pleased to see commands the confidence and attachment of large sections of my countrymen". He did not live to see the completion of the golden or diamond jubilee of the paper which was his heart and soul and he could not have dreamed it would complete a hundred years with a giant's strength and a popularity and fame which have transcended national frontiers.

**W**E HAVE TRAVELLED a considerable distance of time while considering the life and career of G. Subramania Aiyer. We must now go back to the period when M. Veeraraghavachariar became the sole proprietor of *The Hindu* and Karunakara Menon the Editor. It could be noticed that the severance of Subramania Aiyer's connection resulted in a sudden drop in the news and Press extracts from England and also from the Indian Press which used to be so important a feature of *The Hindu*. A popular feature, contemporary opinion, was absent and the London letter did not appear for several weeks. Out of 12 pages about six pages carried advertisements and the rest were devoted to editorials, news, extracts and letters to the editor. It was clear that things were unsettled and the proprietor and the new Editor were trying to carry out a reorganisation. There was an effort at economy and this was evident when the proprietor advertised that the front upstairs portion of *The Hindu* premises was to be let. It was indicated the portion included a big hall and a verandah "well-suited for any mercantile business". Another announcement said that all kinds of job work in English and Tamil would be done in *The Hindu National Press*, including printing of text-books, petitions and pamphlets. The London letter reappeared after an interval. A new feature, a Saturday supplement of four pages with news, articles and extracts, was introduced late in 1898.

In the political field, the appointment of Lord Curzon to succeed Lord Elgin as Viceroy was announced. *The Hindu* cautiously welcomed the appointment and was specially interested in Lady Curzon the fame of whose beauty had preceded her. "We learn that every one who had a glimpse of her during the voyage and her ladyship's triumphant entry into Calcutta broke forth into expressions of admiration of her personal charms. The reporter of a vernacular paper describes her Ladyship's beauty as a novelist would do that of his heroine".

Of Lord Curzon *The Hindu's* initial impressions were: "His successive utterances have brought out his individuality of character into bold relief and the repeated evidence he is giving of his thorough grasp of Indian problems and of his determination to act with justice and righteousness can inspire nothing but feelings of the utmost confidence in the public mind". *The Hindu* was happy that Lord Curzon had told the Muslims that Government could not lower the standard of efficiency so as to favour a backward community; nor could it



interfere with the progress of others for the same end. The Hindu quoted Lord Curzon's dictum that "the patronage of the state must be regulated in the main by public competition and by the reward of merit and that the true law of progress is not the depression of the educational standard to humour the limitations of the individual but the elevation of the individual to the level of modern competition". The Hindu said: "The happy definition of the law of progress here set forth militates against the theory which has been propped up even by certain Anglo-Indian officials and politicians that the more advanced communities must be deprived of the political privileges to which they are entitled because certain backward communities prefer to lag behind and be a clog in the wheel of progress. Lord Curzon's warning that the progressive classes cannot be made to stop because there are others who are unable to keep pace with them will, we hope, have the wholesome effect of stimulating enterprise and activity in the backward classes".

The good impression which the new Viceroy had created was further emphasised by a story from the Calcutta Correspondent of The Hindu in March, 1899 "Rumour says", he wrote, "that lately one night Lord Curzon saw lamps burning in some of the rooms of the Government of India office building — which are situated close to Government House — and sent his Private Secretary to find out why the lamps were burning at such an unusual hour. The Private Secretary reported that some Bengali clerks were busy with their pens, being ordered to finish up some arrears of work by the Secretary of the Department in which they worked. His Excellency asked if the Secretary was at the office with the working clerks and the reply being in the negative, H E sent his P S again to the clerks ordering them to go home and instructing them not to work beyond the appointed hours unless their head, the Secretary of the Department, also agreed to stay with them to work. The story is believed to be true and the sympathy it evinces on the part of the new Viceroy for the poor over-worked clerks has raised him much in the estimation of the native community in Calcutta".

When it was reported that the British Press was criticising Lord Curzon for making too many speeches, The Hindu defended him by saying that he had "inspired some amount of confidence in the people, not only in his capacity for government but also in his sympathy and sincerity of purpose. Besides His Lordship has not made more speeches than many of his less capable predecessors. The fact is Lord Curzon has spoken with striking vigour, originality and sympathy for the people. Lord Curzon has made his personality felt in the administration of India and we hope that His Lordship will continue to speak".

When Lord Curzon came to South India in November, 1900, The Hindu deputed a special correspondent to accompany him and gave full coverage to his speeches and the addresses presented to him.

The Hindu soon had to revise its opinion about Lord Curzon and it came about as a result of Lord Curzon's behaviour in Madras, especially his attitude to the Mahajana Sabha which presented an address to him. According to The Hindu Lord Curzon (who arrived in Madras on December 11, 1900) asked about the representative character of the Mahajana Sabha, whether it represented The Hindus alone or it represented the whole 250 millions of India. The Hindu said: "Such a question is beside the point. Whether the Mahajana Sabha was

entitled to speak on behalf of the whole people of India was not the question before His Excellency, but how far public grievances and wants set forth in the address could be remedied and supplied. Lord Curzon cannot expect the people of India to refrain from expressing opinions which are not palatable to him or with which he does not agree". The Hindu concluded. "Taken as a whole the replies given to all the addresses are unsatisfactory and it is very much to be regretted that there has been such a marked change in His Excellency's utterances since his famous speech at Bombay"

The Hindu reverted to Lord Curzon's performance in Madras the next day and said: "it is impossible to say that the public interests of this Presidency have been advanced a whit by what His Excellency has heard and seen or what he has said. All round there is disappointment and in many quarters there is indignation at the method of controversy adopted by His Excellency. So long as he was content to express fine sentiments and some times fine platitudes, Lord Curzon appeared to be at his best, but as occasions rose for him to deal with practical politics and to face controversial problems, there appeared to be a change in his spirit as well as in his attitude; and judging by some of the replies made yesterday we are even disposed to think that His Excellency does not always give to the representations made to him that patient consideration which is essential not merely for a proper understanding of the issues raised, but for forming a dispassionate judgment on them. In partisan controversy one is often tempted to imagine weak arguments on the opposite side and to seize them for purposes of retort and we fear His Excellency allowed this temptation rather unrestricted play in regard to certain matters of controversial politics"

A great Indian, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, passed away on January 16, 1901 and this is how the Bombay Correspondent of The Hindu reported the event: "Our Kohinoor is lost. Mr. Justice Ranade breathed his last at about 10.30 last night. He walked a mile last evening and dined as usual. When going to his bed room he felt suffocated and soon after died. Bombay mourns him without any exception".

In a tribute The Hindu wrote: "We have rarely had in India under the Queen a man who combined in himself so many elements of greatness, such intellectual and moral accomplishments as were happily blended in Mr. Justice Ranade. With a massive and many sided intellect, with broad and cosmopolitan sympathies, with a keen insight into human nature and the spirit of the age, with hope in the future, and confidence in his countrymen, he was the man most conspicuously fitted to take the lead in all that is conducive to the progress and well-being of the people. He was in every sense a leader who could be sure of his followers, who could conciliate their differences and command their allegiance. If his lot had been cast in different circumstances, if he had been born in England, for example, he might have been a Disraeli or a Gladstone; but born in India he was not destined to rise beyond a High Court judgeship and with his sphere of usefulness and distinction limited to his judicial duties and to such non-official services as his high judicial service permitted him to perform, it is not difficult to realise that he could not give full play to his powers of intellect and character"

In the same month the country lost its great sovereign, Queen Victoria and The Hindu in a black bordered issue printed a four column article on her life

and work, taken from a British journal. The Hindu wrote: "Our great and good Queen Empress has passed away. For three days consecutively, every portion of the Empire, every subject of Her Majesty, was watching at her sick bed, now with despair, and again with hope, but the millions of her loving and devoted subjects whom she has left behind have not been fortunate enough to enjoy longer the beneficence of her glorious reign; and they mourn the great loss the British Empire and the world at large has sustained in her death. Her Majesty represented in herself the noblest ideal of womanhood and the highest embodiment of charity, benevolence and justice. She shed lustre on the throne which she filled, on the empire over which she presided and her example of virtue and righteousness has exercised a most beneficial influence upon the life and morals of mankind not only within the British Empire but all the world over. Her Majesty's reign has been identified with victory, with virtue, with peace, with everything that is good and great. These explain the deep feeling of attachment, veneration and love which the people of India of all classes and creeds entertained towards their beloved Queen Empress. They have forgotten all their differences, of race, colour, rank or position in their allegiance and devotion to their sovereign mother. In fact no force in modern India has helped the formation of a common Indian nationality so much as the inspiring personality of Queen Victoria. People who would not combine for other purposes would easily combine in devotion to Her Majesty. In her they realised the highest ambition of ages, of having a great and virtuous sovereign to rule over this ancient land which since the days of the greatest Hindu kings of old, has never possessed a sovereign who held imperial sway over the whole country and who earned their common gratitude and devotion."

In the next few weeks The Hindu was full of news of sympathetic messages, tributes, condolence meetings and extracts from the British Press of the Queen's last days. That what The Hindu wrote about the great Queen was no idle sentiment but reflected the great hold she had on the life and affection of the Indian people was revealed in an extract from the report of the Tarn Taran Mission in the Punjab which The Hindu published on January 29, 1902. The report said a Sikh resident of a village told the missionaries that they had now become acquainted with the previous existence of the Queen. She was a frog in her previous birth and one day she found herself inside the courtyard of the residence of some holy men. There she saw a vessel of milk and shortly afterwards to her horror she noticed a snake getting into the vessel and meaning to protect the holy men from drinking the polluted milk she climbed on to the vessel and sat on its edge and when the holy men came for refreshment she popped out in their presence and jumped away. The holy men noticing the vessel had been polluted decided to throw the milk away and when they did so they found the snake at the bottom of the vessel and realised that the frog had in fact saved them from drinking the poisonous milk. And filled with gratitude they prayed to their God that in the next existence the frog might be born a Queen and that was how she became the Queen Empress of India. The report added: "Such a story puts a great strain on polite manners for the man was greeted with a burst of laughter when he assured us in all seriousness that the story was worthy of all credence".

A revealing letter on the conditions in India written by an Indian to the London Correspondent of The Hindu and referred to by him in his fortnightly

letter was published in May 1901. The Indian Correspondent, who was described as having spent many years in Bengal and having had much to do with the men who had ruled India and had studied public opinion, wrote in his letter. "Yes, all you say about the sad conditions of the masses of the people is only too grievously true. They do hunger and thirst, and are insufficiently clothed and die prematurely — they and their children. But there is a worse than merely physical suffering; it is the starvation of the mind and all the higher qualities. This kind of starvation is rampant. We have mainly two grievances. We are underfed, and we are overgoverned. That is to say we need more food and less rigour. In your anxiety to procure more food for the masses you have forgotten the other more serious grievance under which the whole people suffer. For example, you never say anything about police rule in India. Here the accused has not the benefit of doubt; every doubt is pressed into service of the prosecution; here punishment, severe punishment is the universal pastime of the magistrates and judges. For ourselves we fear rigour more than we fear starvation. You will have noticed, I am sure, that 16 men were hanged the other day for complicity in murder which perhaps, any Hindu would have committed under similar circumstances"

It is worth recalling in this connection that a European who admitted he shot dead two Indians in a Bengal village following a quarrel with a marriage party was acquitted by the trial judge in May, 1901 and to make matters worse the Englishman of Calcutta defended the murders by saying "Although there will be a shriek from the native press, we cannot help thinking that possibly some such occurrence was necessary to teach the villagers of Koderma a lesson which is too much lost sight of elsewhere, namely, that it is and ought to be dangerous to assault a European". The Hindu commented: "The scandalous acquittal of Europeans charged with the murder of Indians is perhaps sufficiently explained by sentiments such as above. It will at the same time be well to remember that it is not expedient to drive Indians to despair"

An "Esteemed Englishman", who often contributed articles to *The Hindu*, wrote in December, 1901: "Who would free themselves must strike the blow". You, dear Indian friends of mine, with whom I hold earnest talk from time to time in these columns as I can find opportunity, do, I beg of you, learn the truth enshrined in these words. India will be saved by the Indians or she will never be saved — when I say this I do not mean that we who are English will have no part, are needed to take any part, in the honourable struggle which shall feed the hungry and clothe the naked and provide that share in the rule of their own country which alone can develop true manhood and an honest patriotism. Quite the contrary; there will not merely be a place for such in their ranks, their presence will be indispensable. The brown hand and the white hand will both have to hold the plough which is to make the furrow into which the seed of right-doing is to be cast and nurtured till it grows with such abundance that the healing of the now sorely-sick nation shall be ensured. But the brown hands must grasp the plough. Without them nothing effective can be done"

As *The Hindu* approached its silver jubilee tributes came from outside India. An English lady wrote: "I must quote to you from a letter I received from a civilian now on furlough in France. I had sent him several copies of *The Hindu*. He writes, 'The Hindu is really a most excellent paper. Do you mean to say that it is really and solely conducted by Indian gentlemen? The tone is so good,

the matter so interesting". The Hindu said: "We can give our most unqualified assurance to our lady correspondent's friend that The Hindu is really and solely conducted by Indian gentlemen".

The Hindu received another testimonial from a "very unexpected quarter". "We never thought", said The Hindu "that The Hindu was an object of any great interest in America — and that too, to a man like Mr. Bryan who contested the American Presidency unsuccessfully with Major McKinley, the present President and may possibly succeed him hereafter. But it seems he was really interested by the articles in this journal. A gentleman who had sent him The Hindu reports his remark in these terms: "Why", said he, "that is really a remarkable paper and shows that the black man can attend to his own affairs quite well if left to bear his burden himself without the questionable aid of his white brother"

The Hindu itself lost heavily in a defamation suit brought against it by a Mysore official in December 1899. Mr Justice Shepherd at the Madras High Court delivered judgment in favour of the plaintiff, B. G. Krishna Iyengar, formerly Deputy Commissioner, Hassan, Mysore State and awarded damages of Rs 5000 and costs to him. The case was instituted against G. Subramania Aiyer, the then Editor of The Hindu and M. Veeraraghavachariar, Manager, for publishing certain defamatory articles against the plaintiff. P. S. (later Sir) Sivaswami Aiyer appeared for Subramania Aiyer and T. V. Seshagiri Aiyer for Veeraraghavachariar. The libelious statement alleged by the plaintiff was that he tampered with his age record, that he had been compelled to retire in consequence and imputation of motive of dishonesty to him. Commenting on the case the Mahratta of Poona said that The Hindu had to defend itself in Court twice in the last two or three years.

In June, 1901 an effort was made by M. Veeraraghavachariar with the aid of his friends to make The Hindu a limited company. An editorial in the paper on June 12 said. "In accordance with the widely felt desire to place The Hindu newspaper on a firm and permanent basis and to enhance its usefulness, a company under the title of Hindu Limited, has been formed; and the prospectus which we print today gives the particulars. Joint stock enterprise is comparatively new in this country and joint stock enterprise on behalf of a newspaper is rarer still. In England it is by no means unusual for newspapers to be owned and managed by companies; but in this country the corporate spirit has not been sufficiently strong or widespread to promote the growth of joint stock companies. It is however thought that a paper like The Hindu cannot fail to enlist on its side what corporate spirit there is in the country. The present proprietor of the paper is willing to make over the concern to the company in the hope that by so doing the permanence of the paper will be established unaffected by the fortunes or predilections of individual owners. Indigenous newspapers in this country have been mainly made by the efforts of individual men, who with rare patriotism and public spirit devoted their talents and energy to a profession which in the earlier periods, at any rate, was far less cheery than other professions like law or medicine or the public service. These men started with more brain than money and were consequently unable to furnish the funds necessary to maintain their newspapers at the level of modern requirements. The literary portion of a newspaper is no doubt the most important part; but the craving for telegrams and news has

enormously increased of late even among the Indian readers and this cannot be satisfied without expending more money. As a going concern it may be said The Hindu is very prosperous, but it is possible to make it more paying and prosperous by adding to its attractions in the shape of more telegrams and more news and contributions on a variety of matters which appeal to differing tastes. It is also possible by extending the business of the Press to create additional income either to be spent on further improvements of the paper or to be added to the Reserve Fund. Worked by a company and with the capital proposed it should be easy enough to conduct this paper on a high level of efficiency and usefulness. It is this feeling that encourages the present proprietor to make over the whole concern into the hands of the company."

The prospectus revealed the proposed company's capital to be Rs 1,20,000 divided into 1,200 shares of Rs 100 each. On the Board of Directors were these names: P. Rungiah Naidu (Chairman), Dewan Bahadur R. Ragoonath Row, P. Anandachari, C. Jambulinga Mudaliar, C. Sankaran Nair, T. V. Seshagiri Iyer and M. Tirumalachariar. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar was the Legal Adviser and M. Veeraraghavachariar, Manager.

There was support from sister newspapers to The Hindu in its effort to promote a new company. The Madras Mail wrote: "We wish all success to our contemporary under its new management." The Madras Standard: "We hope and trust the public will rally to the support of our contemporary by taking up shares". Lord Wenlock, a former Governor of Madras, wrote from England. "I am glad that The Hindu is carrying on its work in spite of vicissitudes such as, I believe, most journals have to go through and I hope you will be able to continue it on a sound financial basis."

But the scheme fell through since less than half the shares were subscribed. Veeraraghavachariar attributed this to the ban on Government servants taking shares in joint stock companies.

The Hindu celebrated its silver jubilee on September 21, 1903 at its premises on Mount Road on a grand scale. A report in the paper said "The gaiety of the celebration was one unprecedented in the annals of The Hindu. Public enthusiasm marked the event and the success exceeded our best expectations." Over 400 guests, Indian and European, were present and from a list of the names given in the report it is evident they represented the elite of Madras. "The Central Hall", said the report, "was decorated with a profusion of evergreens and the several hanging globes therein and the green chandeliers in the hall shed the most mild and agreeable light about the time of sunset." The guests were entertained to music by the Ramnad State musician, Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, "the ablest vocal singer in southern India" who was specially deputed for the occasion by the Raja of Ramnad.

The first speaker at the meeting held later was Mr. W. F. Grahame, Editor of the Madras Times, who as he himself told the audience, had then been connected with the Madras Times for not more than six months. Previously he had been in the Indian Civil Service and served in various districts of the Madras Presidency. He said: "I have been acquainted with The Hindu for a great many years and at one time I felt that I was quite left out in the cold if I took a copy of The Hindu and did not find a longer or shorter comment on what I myself had been doing. The Hindu took note of all the faults I committed and everything that I did — right or wrong — and took me to task about it, and in fact I might

say it chastised me as a mother would chastise a naughty child. If I had done anything for which I could fairly be taken to task, *The Hindu* was pretty sure to let me know about it. I hope that as good children improve under maternal correction so did I under the careful schooling I got because I have reasons to think that in the last two districts in which I served I was considered to have done fairly well".

In an unusual tribute to his rival, the Editor of *The Madras Times* said: "This paper has been a model paper and quite fit to be a model to any paper. It has taken up its stand to protect the interests of the people of this country and has boldly told the Government whether of Madras or India when it thought that the Government was in the wrong. It has never hesitated to speak its mind honestly and openly and it always championed the cause of the oppressed in a right manner and in a noble spirit".

A measure of the popularity of *The Hindu* and the great place it has already occupied in the hearts of the people of South India was this tribute from V.P. Madhava Rao, who was later to be Dewan of Mysore, which was among the many messages read at the function. "The Hindu by long association has become almost a member of one's household and on the day *The Hindu* does not appear one feels as if a family companion was missing".

The silver jubilee function was notable for the presence of G. Subramania Aiyer who made a powerful speech on the problems of the Indian Press and whose contribution to the growth of *The Hindu* was acknowledged by M. Veeraraghavachariar in welcoming him.

In an article in connection with the silver Jubilee, Veeraraghavachariar spoke of the troubles and difficulties which the paper had faced in the past 25 years. "There have been times of difficulties and danger", he said, "but by the grace of Providence I have been able to tide over them. Like all journals *The Hindu* has had to defend actions for alleged libels and pay penalties. During the course of 25 years that the paper has been in existence we had to defend four such suits; one of them was compromised, while in the other cases we had to pay heavy damages. This no doubt considerably increased my difficulties and it is probably this risk in the journalistic enterprise that has deterred other men of public spirit from joining me in this noble work. The sacred principles of fairness and justice have always guided us in our work and our aim has always been to interpret correctly the feelings of the Indian population and to create mutual confidence between the Governor and the governed".

*The Hindu* in an editorial to mark its silver jubilee wrote. "During all these years the people have been accustomed to look to *The Hindu* in times of trouble and trial and on occasions of triumph and joy for the expression of national feeling and opinion, and to us it is a satisfaction and legitimate cause of pride that in our efforts to interpret the feelings, the opinions, the wants, and the aspirations of the people, we have attained some measure of success as is evidenced by the attitude of approval and sympathy maintained towards us by the public at large and by the success which the popular cause has met with during so many years of social and political activity. In a country where the rulers and the ruled belong to different races and nationalities the function of the Press which fills the role of the interpreter between the two is particularly difficult. While on the one hand we feel that we owe a duty to the Government, our obligations to the people for whom we speak are greater. While we desire

to be friendly and conciliatory to our rulers and to be considerate and respectful in our criticisms, we are liable to be thought failing in our duty if in times of political excitement caused by the unpopular acts and measures of the Government we do not anticipate and act up to public expectations and reflect in our writings the intensity of public feeling and we have endeavoured to do our duty to the satisfaction of our conscience and with all possible fairness to our rulers. We are also glad to acknowledge that the Government have on the whole treated us with consideration, though we have had frequently to differ from them and to criticise their measures severely. While we have never hesitated to give to our rulers full credit for honesty of purpose, we have claimed the same for ourselves. Our respective interests cross at so many points that frequent agreement is out of the question and the only way to smoothen our relations under the circumstances is to agree on either side that difference of opinion is inevitable. If our desire to promote harmony and goodwill between Englishmen and Indians in this country has so far resulted in any good, we have indeed cause for satisfaction. Nothing can be more gratifying to us than to see the policy of the Government so co-ordinated to the interests of the people that we may be at liberty to serve both with equal devotion and zeal. The educated people of this country and certainly the most thoughtful men among us have no other desire than to see the British administration adapted to the special needs and conditions of this country and the British Government made a national Government among us. It is towards this end that we have been labouring and to the same end we will continue to devote our energy and our efforts. It is the highest aim of our national movement and it is also the aim of every Indian patriot".

What The Hindu said about the behaviour of the rulers was exemplified by the remarks made by Lord Amphill, Governor of Madras in his convocation address at the Madras University in 1903. The Governor characterised those who criticised Government not only in this country but elsewhere as "ill-informed, uncharitable, dishonest, self-seeking and discontented". He exhorted the new graduates not "to fall in the ways of these wicked men or this faction of discontent". He further claimed that the "Men who are actually engaged in the work of administration know best the actualities and possibilities of the existing state of things and not those who traduce the Government for the sake of notoriety and personal gain".

Commenting, The Hindu said: "If Lord Amphill had studied history to better purpose he would have found that the greatest evil has been caused by rulers and not by their critics. Ignorance, rapacity, profligacy and other vices have frequently been the causes of the decline and fall of empires and kingdoms, but seldom has free criticism even when it is most ill-informed, ill-judged or malicious caused harm to great public interests. Indeed rulers are apt to think, especially in India that they have nothing to gain from outside criticism. But even in India the wisest of rulers have recognised its value and necessity even in spite of the fact that critics are sometimes apt to be unreasonable, unjust or unnecessarily harsh. In spite of all the contempt which certain men in authority may express for public criticism there remains the fact where there is a free Press and free discussion, reason must make converts and Governors must live in more or less fear of the governed. Even India cannot be an exception to this rule. If a British statesman of any authority had talked as Lord Amphill did



yesterday his political reputation would have been in very great danger but Lord Ampthill has the consolation that he has not so far built up a political reputation which he need be in fear of losing"

In 1903 The Hindu successfully carried on a campaign against the Madras Marina Loop Railway Scheme which was intended to help commuters. The idea was to have a suburban railway line between the road and the sea on the Marina and the first intimation of the proposal came when the plan was reproduced in the *Indian Engineering* of Calcutta. The Hindu said that the proposed line far from serving the professed purpose of a suburban railway would have none other than the deplorable result of defacing the Marina and operating as a "very serious impediment to the health and comfort of the public who at present resort to the beach in large numbers". It urged that unless the line was taken along the Buckingham Canal there was no chance of the line being useful to those who inhabited the outlying parts of the city. "The line if at all it is to serve passenger traffic should be within the easiest reach of the residents of Triplicane and Mylapore. We hope we have heard the last of the Madras Marina Loop Railway"

The curtain was rung down on the matter when in reply to a question in the Legislative Council the Government said "In view of the dissatisfaction expressed by the public the Government will be glad to reconsider the matter from the point of view which is more in consonance with their own inclinations"

There was a widespread report in July, 1903, that Kashmir would be annexed by the British Indian Government for military and strategic reasons. The Hindu was strongly opposed to the move and on July 16 wrote under the heading "A needed disclaimer" "For some months past there have been persistent reports of an intention on the part of Lord Curzon's Government to annex Kashmir to British India. During the past few days we had also the details of the arrangement resolved upon. We were wondering why Lord Curzon who never allowed himself to be long misrepresented by reticence was in this matter content to let the stories spread. . . We are therefore particularly pleased to see the report contradicted through the columns of the Pioneer. The Pioneer report said, 'we are authorised to publish an emphatic contradiction of the statement which has appeared in various forms in different newspapers to the effect that the Government of India are about to take over Kashmir State. It is absolutely untrue that the transference of Kashmir from native to British rule has been contemplated by the Government or indeed that such a suggestion has been mooted in a single responsible quarter' ". The Hindu said, "The colonisation of Kashmir by Europeans was, we remember, once seriously proposed by Sir Lepel Griffin and it is not unlikely that among politicals and military men the idea is popular. But we hope and believe that serious statesmen will have due regard for the grave political consequences that may ensue from any violent policy in regard to Kashmir. There is no state in India which will not afford all the help in its power to protect the Indian Empire and Kashmir, we are sure, will not be the least unwilling to make any sacrifice that may be necessary. But this is quite different from surrendering its independence and its territory into other hands for military, strategic or other purposes. Kashmir in the possession of the Maharaja of Kashmir is as good as Kashmir under British rule for all practical purposes. And that being so it will

be an unnecessary violence to the feelings of the Indian princes and people to deal with it in the manner rumoured"

In the same issue *The Hindu* carried the following report from its Bengal Correspondent: "In military circles the rumour of the willingness of the Maharaja of Kashmir to voluntarily abdicate his throne is once again rife. It is said the Maharaja intends out of his free will to make over Kashmir to the British Government. This so called willingness on the part of His Highness to voluntarily abdicate is not new, it dates as far back as 1889. It was then that Col. Pary Nisbet, the then British Resident in Kashmir, promulgated to the outside world the edict of the voluntary resignation of the Maharaja. How this edict was extracted from His Highness and how the Maharaja had to write to the Viceroy and to *The Times* to have it withdrawn is already known to the world. H. E. Lord Curzon being a consummate statesman, the idea of annexing Kashmir is once again attempted".

Here are three Editorial paragraphs which appeared in *The Hindu* between June and October, 1903 and which are interesting reading: "Latrine accommodation in III class carriages of S. I. Railway. We learn the South Indian Railway company have provided latrine accommodation in their newly constructed III class carriages which now run from Tanjore to Negapatam. We hope similar carriages will be introduced in other sections of the line also. For sometime past the attention of railway companies in the country generally has been drawn to the necessity for carriages with latrine accommodation. We believe it was the Government of India that pressed on them the necessity and when once the demand comes from the proper quarter the railway companies are ready to accede."

Indian servants in English households. "We learn that a movement for the establishment of Indian servants in English households has been commenced in London. It would seem the domestic servant problem in London is growing worse and worse. The trouble due to an inadequate number of domestic servants would seem to have become so serious that an old Anglo-Indian, we understand, called recently a private meeting to discuss the trouble. India, he pointed out, had more servants than the European community could give employment to. Why not offer inducements to Indian servants to come to London? This question was discussed and a committee was appointed to go into the matter. We cannot say how far the committee will succeed in drawing Indian domestic servants to Britain. What a prospect? Indians are recognised as some of the best servants of the world!"

Motor cars in Madras: "Motor cars are now driven in Madras for hire. They are increasingly in evidence at present. The Triplicane Temple square is the resort of more than one hackney car while there are some more whose drivers undertake to carry passengers from one part of the city to another. Children in large number take to this novel conveyance and they can be seen huddled together in the cars with here and there an elderly passenger to take care of them. From morning till night these hackney cars are busy and at the rate of an anna for a drive round the temple, the drivers are making a large sum every day. The office people who have to reach their respective offices in Black Town also avail themselves of this conveyance to a certain extent and cars are actually advertised for hire from Triplicane to Broadway at the rate of four annas a drive for a passenger. The novelty of the thing has great attractions

for the public and at this rate it should not be long before we find the motor car becoming a very popular vehicle in Madras"

Among the various circulars issued by the Bengal Government described by The Hindu as "ridiculous and silly" was one by the Education Department in January, 1903 which was called "the pronunciation circular". The Hindu quoted the Amrita Bazar Patrika of Calcutta as saying: "The pronunciation circular is an indication that the Government is really going to court not only ridicule but contempt. The principles of the circular might have been very well conceived by a despot with irresistible powers and weak brains but it does not suit a sensible Government. Pray, how do you expect the natives to catch your accent? Of London or Yorkshire? You must create teachers, that is to say, before the principles of the circular are sought to be carried out, the country ought to be studded with pronunciation academies. But there is another thing to be done even before establishing pronunciation academies. They must first settle among themselves what is the true pronunciation of each word" The Hindu's comment "Even with Lord Curzon at the head of affairs in India, official freaks have full play in Bengal"

Pronunciation is always a bee in the bonnet of an Englishman as "S.V.V." (S.V. Vijayaraghavachariar), noted short story writer in The Hindu in later days, found in an encounter with an Englishman on a tram car in Madras in October, 1918. Writing about his experience in a letter to the Editor, S.V.V. said the whole thing started with his pronouncing Royapuram with the accent on the first syllable and the Englishman on the second. From Royapuram it came to "Egmore" when a passenger called it "Elumbur". The Englishman thought our pronunciation ways were shocking. He asked S.V.V. if he lived in the city or in the country. "I felt he thought I belonged to the country as my pronunciation of Indian names was intolerable", S.V.V. wrote. Asked by the Englishman whither he was bound, S.V.V. replied: "Tiruvallikeni" and the Englishman burst into laughter and said: "You mean Triplicane". The Englishman asked for his name. S.V.V. passed on to him his visiting card on which was written "Raghunatha Thatachari". The Englishman thought the name should be written as Tathachari which he said was the correct transliteration and he asked S.V.V. if he had read the rules of transliteration in the Board's Standing Orders (the reference was to the Madras Government's Board of Revenue).

S.V.V. confessed he had not familiarised himself with those rules ("which probably had the force of law") "which regulated the pronunciation of our names and I was almost expecting my European accuser to say that ignorance of law was no excuse". S.V.V. then asked for his companion's name and in his visiting card he found the name "Marjoribanks" and he read it phonetically "Marjoribanks". The European was indignant. "Marchibanks" if you please", he said and S.V.V. concluded: "In the fitness of things our names may be distorted out of sound as our men have been distorted out of nationality but "Marjoribanks" will always be "Marchibanks" whether in an Indian mouth or a European's. Why don't we have the liberty to write and pronounce the names of our places and persons as will bring out the meaning of those words? We don't have names like "Lepper" or "Dung" producing disgusting ideas even as we pronounce them or names which convey no ideas at all. Whenever I pronounce the name "Tiruvallikeni" a poetic picture always presents itself before my mind of a beautiful tank with sparkling sheet of water studded with

lotus flowers wafting a cool and gentle fragrance energising my whole body and spirit. Why do I kill this aesthetic pleasure and sentiment and call it Triplicane? What unconscious psychological processes have brought about this result? Subjection of sentiment to superior(?) wisdom and civilisation? Or the generous or servile instinct to permit our names roll through the tongues of our ruling race as comfortably as possible? And between you and me, Editor, will not any revolt I may be inclined to make against settled official rules of transliteration and pronunciation land me into difficulties and lay me open to the charge of disloyalty? I have therefore thought it prudent to take a lesson from our Moderate leaders and take things as are given to us. I have since taken pains to learn the correct pronunciation and transliteration of names principally through the Southern Railway Guide."

When the Russo-Japanese war broke out early in 1904 *The Hindu* not only carried daily reports of the battle scene but also provided background information on the relative strength of the combatants culled from foreign newspapers and periodicals. In a brief editorial *The Hindu* welcomed the Japanese attack saying it would have been suicidal for Japan to have waited any longer. In another editorial on the war *The Hindu* said "The information about the war shows the most vigorous activity, courage and strategic skill on the part of Japan who has within a very short time inflicted the most serious and material loss on the enemy". *The Hindu* added, "A hard contest will determine the respective resources and strength of the parties and if the war ends, as we hope it will, in favour of Japan, Russia will have learnt a lesson which she has very much needed"

When J.N. Tata, the great pioneer of Indian industry died in Mannheim, Germany, on April 19, 1904 *The Hindu* in a black bordered editorial said: "Death has suddenly deprived the Indian community of one of their most patriotic and far sighted countrymen. Mr. Tata strove to serve his country in a manner that few other Indians have done; and what is more remarkable is that his efforts were directed towards developing the best intellects of the country for the industrial regeneration of India. It would have been little surprising if he had merely contented himself with opening new industries, establishing new business and opening commercial relations with foreign countries. But his insight led him into quite other paths. He perceived that India possessed intellect which could be made to achieve great things; and his scholarships to send young men to Europe and his research Institute scheme were the direct results of this perception". *The Hindu* said, "Mr. Tata, it is true, hardly figured in the public life of the country, and he was not a politician in the ordinary sense of the word. But so far as devotion to the interests of his country and his people were concerned he had not many equals. Not only did he strive to raise the status of his country — albeit industrially — but made sacrifices towards that end such as few other men have made. Few men of wealth would think of devoting so many as Rs. 30 lakhs for the establishment of a research institute from which neither he nor his family can get anything. It is a pity he did not live to see the completion of his scheme owing to the distrust, suspicion and dilatory procedure of Lord Curzon's Government. But his countrymen will deeply appreciate and feel grateful for his noble benefactions, and we have no doubt that this appreciation and gratitude will not be merely of

this or the next generation but of successive generations to come. India has truly lost one of her greatest and noblest sons”

# A New Owner and A New Editor

16

**O**N APRIL 1, 1905 The Hindu was sold to Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar, legal adviser of the paper. An announcement in The Hindu on that day over the signature of M. Veeraraghavachariar said "I hereby give notice that I have sold all my rights and interests in the National Press and The Hindu including goodwill, building, plant, machinery etc., to M. R. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar, Vakil, High Court and he will be entitled to receive and collect all subscriptions for the paper and its advertisements and be liable for all charges that may be incurred from this day forward"

Under this was a notification by S. Kasturiranga Iyengar, Proprietor "It is requested that all remittances and business communications may be sent to the undersigned"

In the same issue of the paper while there was no editorial by the new proprietor and Editor, a columnist, "Anon", who wrote under the heading "current topics" referred to the change of proprietorship of The Hindu. He said. "The Hindu has changed hands. Everywhere in quarters high and low this is the chief topic of the week. What does the change indicate? Is there going to be a change in policy? Is it a profitable undertaking? Is he alone in the concern or is he backed up by other people? While it is not possible to give a definite answer to the public to all these questions, I understand that the new proprietor, Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar, is not the sole proprietor — there are other influential people supporting him — that they are all actuated by a single motive and that is that the leading Indian organ in India should be kept up in a high state of efficiency and they are determined to leave no stone unturned in attaining that end. It is with great reluctance that Mr. Veeraraghavachariar parted with The Hindu. He tried hard to keep it but the difficulties were too great even for him. Any other Indian would have succumbed long ago, under similar circumstances and it is a matter for congratulation to him that he has been able to place The Hindu in safe hands and the new proprietor will continue to receive his help and guidance in improving it. As for the policy of the paper it will, I gather, continue to represent the views of the Indian public honestly without fear or favour. I think the readers of The Hindu may take advantage of the opportunity to make suggestions to the new proprietor for improving the paper"

Veeraraghavachariar continued to be the Printer and Publisher on behalf of the new proprietor and C. Karunakara Menon was appointed Joint Editor. Thus, came to an end the adventure of the youthful members of the Triplicane Literary Society who began as a team of six and ended with two. These carried on the burden for 27 long years with one of them dropping out after 20 years' strenuous work. The great organ of public opinion which they conceived, brought forth and nurtured passed into another hand with its name and reputation unsullied, to continue the journey and achieve the common goal of Indian nationalism.

Kasturiranga Iyengar was born on December 15, 1859, the last of three sons to Seshu Iyengar, an official under the Collector of Tanjore. He had his early education in Kumbakonam and joined the Presidency College in Madras where he took his arts degree in 1879. He was employed as a Sub-Registrar in the Registration Department of the Madras Government in Tiruvayyaru and Vriddhachalam and studied for law while in service and got his law degree in 1884. He resigned his official position and moved on to Coimbatore to set up practice as a lawyer. Within a short time, he had a lucrative practice and was respected by the judges before whom he appeared and commanded the confidence of the public. He began taking keen interest in public affairs and he transferred his practice to Madras in 1894 not only to improve his status and income but also to take a greater and more active role in the politics of the day. A close friend of his, M. R. Narasimha Iyengar, has said "He found that a provincial town like Coimbatore did not give full scope for his energies". It was clear to friends and relatives of Kasturiranga Iyengar that his mind was drawing him away from law to something else and that something as events proved was journalism. Kasturiranga Iyengar settled down in Mylapore and found the top lawyers, otherwise known as the "Mylapore Group", were against him. This group was led by V. Krishnaswami Aiyer and included P. R. Sundara Aiyer, V. C. Desikachariar, T. R. Ramachandra Aiyer, Sir S. Subramania Aiyer and C. R. Pattabhirama Aiyer. The chief reason for their antagonism was that they did not take kindly to mofussil lawyers practising in Madras in the High Court. Kasturiranga Iyengar naturally shifted his allegiance to what was then known as the "Egmore Group" which included Sir C. Sankaran Nair, Dr. T. M. Nair, T. Rangachari and Rym Nambiar and his relations with this group were very close and intimate. He was to acquire The Hindu many years later in association with two members of the group.

Kasturiranga Iyengar plunged into politics and it became his dominant activity. He was one of the founder-members of the Madras Mahajana Sabha and continued to be closely associated with its activities, till his death. He was the Secretary of the Reception Committee of the Congress session held in Madras in 1898 and 1903. He had already developed contacts with The Hindu by writing to it on legal topics and became its Legal Adviser in 1895. When The Hindu was in serious difficulties in 1902 and thereafter and the plan to float a joint stock company failed, the idea of purchasing the paper struck Kasturiranga. His family was against him in this "mad venture" as they described it and his friends advised him against taking the risk especially when the paper was not in a sound condition financially. The one man whose advice he would have listened to, his elder brother, Srinivasaraghava Iyengar, was not there for

he had passed away in 1903 Kasturiranga bravely took the decision to go ahead and his partners were Sankaran Nair and T Rangachari

In a letter which Kasturiranga wrote to C Vijayaraghavachariar, a notable lawyer of Salem and his well-wisher, from the Cosmopolitan Club, Madras (of which he was a prominent member) on March 18, 1905 he announced that he and his friends had bought The Hindu. The letter said "Mr Sankaran Nair and myself have agreed to purchase The Hindu from Mr Veeraraghavachariar for Rs 75,000. One more partner may be taken in the concern sooner or later. I have no reason to think that the price is too high as shortly after I made the agreement for sale with Mr Veeraraghavachariar there was an offer for Rs 5,000 more. Under present arrangement Mr Veeraraghavachariar will be connected with the paper not as a proprietor nor as having any financial authority or responsibility, but he is to be in charge of some portion of the work on a salary to be fixed hereafter. The sale deed is not yet executed but the bargain may be considered as legally binding on both sides. As you know I have long had an idea to secure this property and to work it for reform and the public good and I pray to God it will be successful. I trust you will approve of my enterprise and support it as much as you can. I shall be obliged if you can see your way to lend me Rs10,000 to be repaid by the end of the year. As soon as the conveyance is completed I will write to you for suggestions regarding the conduct and improvement of the paper. I do not intend to take part immediately in the editorial management of the paper but I will see that the financial position is properly safeguarded".

The letter was an indication that Kasturiranga had taken the decision and the die was cast. Speaking of the risk which he then took, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer, his contemporary in the Law College, said in 1935 "One would have thought that the conduct of a daily newspaper was a somewhat hazardous enterprise on the part of one who had turned 40 and who had not previously worked in the profession of journalism. But journalism had its attractions for Mr Kasturiranga Iyengar. It supplied him with opportunities for serving the interests of the country in a manner which was most congenial to him. It was in the profession of journalism he found his true *metier*".

Within a month of his taking over The Hindu, Kasturiranga Iyengar had to lose the services of Karunakara Menon who started his own paper, Indian Patriot and within eight months Veeraraghavachariar had to go too because of illness and the entire burden of editorial and business administration fell on his shoulders. He called in the services of his nephew, A. Rangaswami, who was a lawyer in Tanjore, as Assistant Editor and Manager of the paper. He took vigorous measures to put the finances of the paper in a strong position. The pages of the paper which continued to be demifolio (half the present standard size of newspapers) were increased from 12 to 14 and very soon they touched 16 and 18. There were more advertisements than before and arrears in subscriptions were prevented by simply stopping supply of paper to defaulters. Kasturiranga eliminated once for all the practice of depending on donations and gifts for the upkeep of the paper and made it clear to all those concerned with the working of the paper that it must stand on its own feet. On the news side he subscribed for Reuter's telegrams, a service which The Hindu could not afford until then and had to lift foreign stories from local morning papers and upcountry journals. He appointed more correspondents in mofussil



and north Indian centres and encouraged active public workers to telegraph reports of public activity in their places. He published court cases (local and mofussil) daily and at length and thereby satisfied a large section of the newspaper reading public which came from the legal profession. He made the letters to the editor column more effective by giving more space to it and encouraging controversial and topical issues to be ventilated through it. This column, as we shall see later in this narrative, became as famous as The Hindu editorials, and some of the great debates on national issues and social and religious topics were carried on in this feature spread over many columns and for weeks and months until the Editor came down with his "Further correspondence on this subject will now cease". New features introduced included, weather report, shipping news and commercial news. Although sport news did not occupy much space as it did much later, "Sporting news" as it was headlined had its own place in The Hindu.

After a few months, two friends who had partnered him in purchasing the paper withdrew leaving him the sole proprietor. According to the biographer of Kasturiranga "Though the first year of his ownership proved strenuous and taxing he had the satisfaction of finding that the year closed with a small profit, a bare Rs 150. He had picked up fast the economics of newspaper production and felt confident that with the paper's undisputed popularity and esteem he could face the future with confidence. The personality of the new Editor and the independence, vigour and freshness he was infusing into the policy and writings of the paper were having their effect on its progress, thus ensuring its financial success".

Within a year of his leaving The Hindu, M. Veeraraghavachariar passed away in his village, Attur, near Chingleput on October 6, 1906. He was only 50. In an editorial tribute The Hindu said. "Not many in Madras know that his reputation outside our province and the respect and the regard shown to him by the public outside the Presidency was something very great. In a tribute to him in 1891 the journal *India* (published in London) wrote Of M. Veeraraghavachariar it may be said that from his first entrance to manhood's stage to the present day he has employed his talents in the cause of the commonweal, deriving happiness and satisfaction to himself in the amelioration and the elevation of the hard lot of his fellows". The Hindu added: "And until he was compelled by his health to retire from public life last year, he continued to work unweariedly on behalf of the public. One of the principal characteristics of Veeraraghavachariar's work was that it elicited the admiration of all Europeans who came in contact with him. Both Lord Wenlock and Sir Arthur Havelock have borne testimony to his work especially in connection with the Victoria Students' Hostel. The public of South India will for a long time miss his familiar and valuable personality on all public occasions. He had a fine presence and was of an affable, obliging and generous disposition. We have lost in him one of our foremost public men who did much striking and valuable work during his life in South India".

That The Hindu was disillusioned with the type of agitation carried on by Indian nationalists and called for a change in method was seen in its first serious political editorial under the heading "Change in method of political agitation".

"The disappointment caused by Lord Curzon's rule", it wrote, "has really made some of our public men despair of the future, and such expressions as "mendicant wail" and "mendicant politics" are the outcome of the despondency which a persistent disregard of public opinion has engendered in the minds of some of our people. This disregard is as much due to the system of Government prevailing in this country as to the drawbacks in our political agitation. It is in the power of the Government to disregard protests from the public, to be indifferent to their supplications. In spite of protestations to the contrary, the Government of India is a despotism and is not ordinarily affected by the adverse verdict of even the whole people. This could no longer be the case if our agitation had greater weight and force, if our political organisations were spread throughout the country and if masses of the people took an intelligent and active interest in public affairs. The common idea, at least among our rulers, is that our Congresses and conferences are carried on merely by the English educated classes, the school masters, lawyers and journalists. They do not believe that the masses of the people take any intelligent interest. This may have been true some 20 years ago. But it is not true now. Every intelligent villager is familiar with the politics of the Congress, he fully understands its aims and methods and he feels no difficulty in rendering it every help he can. But he shares the effects of climate and tradition and consequently his interest is more often passive than active. What is necessary is to change this passive attitude of his and to stimulate his zeal and enthusiasm. Many of the districts in our presidency have never seen a political leader from abroad; even the leading politicians in Madras seldom go to the mofussil. We think something should be done by us to send out some of our leading public men to the district centres so that they may deliver lectures on political subjects, organise local committees and entrust the work to the most influential men of the place".

The perceptible change in tone and attitude to the ruling power was more strikingly seen in subsequent editorials. "A pauperised India" was the heading of a leading article in July, 1905. It said: "Is there now a single intelligent Indian who still cherishes a hope that the British Parliament will ultimately save India from ruin? What is British Parliament? It is an assembly of which the majority are always obsequious followers of the Ministers in power. And the Ministers themselves are statesmen who are mindful of retaining their posts at the head of the Government than of the great interests of the various parts of the empire. The ambition of England's statesmen is already producing exhaustion in her vitality and as all empires did in former times, England is squeezing without scruple her great dependancy. Nor is the victim a well fed and fat animal. It is already getting emaciated and bloodless. How can humanity or self-interest be reconciled with such statesmanship? British statesmen must know as well as we do that an overtaxed and pauperised India will only be a burden on the empire and that if she is a source of profit to it and also to enjoy prosperity and contentment herself she must be enabled to develop freely and without impediments when she would partake of the benefits of the Empire as well as contribute to them. But their perception is blinded by the interests of the moment. They lack the sagacity to see far ahead and prefer the pleasures of temporary authority and eminence to the self-satisfaction of a wise penetration into the future. India's hope does

not lie in British statesmanship, it lies solely and entirely in her own exertions"

The last sentence reveals the clear break with the past when The Hindu under G. Subramania Aiyer was clinging to the fond hope that the British Parliament and British statesmen would do their duty by India.

In another appeal to Britain in August, 1905 The Hindu wrote: "The only wise, beneficial and permanent arrangement is to transfer the chief control over the Government of India from the hands of irresponsible Ministers and a servile and degenerate Parliament to those of the people who alone are the rightful and competent guardians of the country's interests. It is not enough that we have begun to be conscious of our many and deep wrongs, but we must give loud and emphatic expression to that consciousness. We must hold up our wrongs in the light where not only the British nation, but the whole civilised world, can see. With a full sense of our rights and of the justice of our cause, we must never be discouraged or cowed down by the concert or intolerance of bounding Proconsuls who by no means represent the true character of the British people, their love of freedom, of justice and fairplay. Calmly but fearlessly and persistently and with a voice more and more loud and united let us demand the fulfilment of those rights which have been repeatedly promised to us and which the principles of the British constitution and the best traditions of the British nation guarantees to all people owing allegiance to the illustrious sovereign of the United Kingdom"

And when Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, arrogantly claimed in November, 1905, "It is indeed a magnificent property that I am handing over to my successor and may he faithfully and diligently guard it", The Hindu said: "Yes, a magnificent property", property of Great Britain which exploits it with the greatest energy and skill. It is worth Rs. 30 millions a year, besides the incalculable moral and political benefits that accrue to the owner from its possession. It is not merely the tribute that India pays annually in tangible wealth for the oft vaunted blessings of British rule that constitute the income derived from this magnificent property; by the varied and highly paying occupation she gives to thousands of British youths, to the talent and resource of that country, she is a property the like of which none of the great powers of the world possess and is the envy of Britain's rivals. Germany, France and America have colonies but these colonies are a source of expense and trouble to their respective mistresses rather than of gain and prestige. It will be erroneous to call the French or German colonies or the Philippine Islands a "magnificent property" of the nations that possess and rule them. It is only India that is in every sense Great Britain's property from which almost every hamlet and town in that country derives the means of living. To the English officials that make their fortune from their Indian service and to the merchants, traders and capitalists that ruthlessly exploit Indian resources and enrich themselves at the expense of the poor and starving inhabitants, she is a land smiling on the lap of prosperity. Lord Curzon ruled India for seven years, and he is the very Hercules of an administrator; and to his statesmanship and political wisdom it would be feeble to try to fix a limit. What else can India be at the end of such a great man's rule than a magnificent property"?

Lord Curzon's parting gift to India was the partition of Bengal which gave rise to the great Swadeshi movement and boycott of British goods. The

feelings of the Bengalees on the dismemberment of their province were reflected in a dispatch by the Bengal Correspondent of *The Hindu* on September 13, 1905.

"So at last the partition of this province is an accomplished fact. The proclamation declaring the dismemberment of our country, the division of our race and separation of kinship between Eastern and Western Bengalees was issued on September 1. The first of September will be a memorable day in Bengal, woefully memorable for the tragedy enacted and the national calamity that befell us on that day. With the partition accomplished Bengal enters into a new phase of life, a period of unrest and agitation which will most likely not end soon. Will Bengal ever be reunited? There are grave doubts about that. My impression is that England having grown imperialistic and shown signs of gradually developing her coercive attitude to India there is no hope for the recovery of the rights, privileges and possessions of which we have already been deprived. The divided Bengal can hardly ever be expected to be reunited. And this means that Bengalees will now be converted into and ever remain an anti-British community"

In another dispatch the same correspondent reported: "Hundreds of meetings have been held in the interior of this province protesting against the partition and adopting the pledge to boycott articles of British manufacture. The enthusiasm awakened among the people in regard to the partition agitation is as deep as it is intense and real. In many places members of the audience at the meetings have destroyed British made articles which they happened to have at the moment on their persons, such as shoes, shirts, watches etc. In other meetings audiences have made a bonfire of all the foreign articles they had in their possession"

*The Hindu* said on September 8, 1905: "We understand that many English houses in Calcutta have wired to England to the effect that the Swadeshi movement is developing fast and assuming gigantic proportions and that no imported articles should be sent out to India this season as there were practically very few purchasers of these articles among the Bengalees".

A message from Calcutta on April 9, 1907 said. "A young Bengalee shop-keeper appeared before the insolvency court today and told Mr. Justice Harrington that the Swadeshi movement was the cause of his ruin. He stated that he traded largely in imported steel trunks. But with the advent of the Swadeshi movement, the customers refused to buy foreign made articles resulting in his being obliged to file his petition of insolvency".

*The Hindu* had noted a few weeks earlier that the Swadeshi movement was spreading rapidly everywhere. "From Bengal it has now extended to every province; in Punjab, upper India, Western and Central India and down in the south, the movement has seized hold of the minds of the masses. Swadeshim is not a new exotic idea imported from the West. It is of purely indigenous growth and the outcome of circumstances — entirely Indian. Though circumstances have given special importance to the movement in Bengal and have led to its being employed as an instrument of political agitation for the redress of a particular grievance, yet the causes that have made it so rapidly popular in every part of India are to be found in the general political and industrial condition of the country. Today the Swadeshi movement presents itself in the same way as the Congress does, as a conspicuous

result of the first stage of the coalescence of the Indian people into a united nation as well as powerful means of adding future strength and solidarity to that coalescence. The Congress has made the Punjabi, the Bengalee, the Mahratta and the Dravidian look upon one another as brethren and fellow citizens; and similarly hereafter the producer and produce of the Punjab will be as indigenous and as deserving of encouragement as they are in the province of their birth". The Hindu said the Swadeshi movement was "more essentially a political and patriotic movement, taking its origin in the universal dissatisfaction with the existing material condition and in the dawning self-consciousness of the nation as a whole. Touching as it does, the more direct material interests of the people, it has caught on with marvellous rapidity throughout the land. It is a movement of great possibilities in the immediate future".

A reader wrote to The Hindu in November, 1905 "The masterful administration of Lord Curzon which is and which will be remembered to the end of time as a unique one in the annals of the history of this country for repressive and reactionary measures, for utter disregard of public opinion and national sentiment, is marked at least by one novel and healthy change, namely, that a sort of public spirit has been infused into the minds of the people of all sections, castes and creeds of this great Indian nationality. The lawyer who has hitherto been sneeringly called the professional agitator, the merchant and the agriculturist who have been noted to be submitting themselves peacefully to all the repressive measures of Government, all these alike have been dominated by this new spirit. The influence and growth of the Indian Press, which has now become a potent factor in Indian politics, the number of meetings that have been held to protest in a legitimate manner against the speeches of high placed individuals containing aspersions upon national character — all these have had their educational value upon the minds of the students. If the young men of today show more enthusiasm, greater public spirit and a truer spirit of self-sacrifice than the young men of 10 years ago, the reason for the new departure on the part of the young individual is due to the political atmosphere in which he lives and moves".

The awakening of the new spirit among the younger generation referred to by The Hindu reader was acclaimed as the "dawn of a great epoch" by The Hindu which asked. "Is there an Indian in any part of India whose bosom does not heave with emotion and hope on reflecting on the signs of the newborn patriotism in evidence at the present moment everywhere from one end of the country to the other? For over 20 years the moribund forces of national revivification have been struggling into fresh birth and today we behold the inspiring and awful spectacle of a great and ancient people stirred into a noble consciousness and realising in their own hopeful and buoyant minds the new turn that their history is taking. India is on the eve of a new epoch in the history of her national career".

The anti-partition and Swadeshi movements in Bengal led to repressive measures by the Government and the citizens of Madras protested against the "Bengal terror" at a public meeting. The Hindu said the protest "signifies that the people of this country have long survived the period when they could be treated like a multitude of barbarians who would patiently and silently suffer under the petty tyranny of officials and have entered upon a period of

manhood, of national self-consciousness and self-respect when they would resent and effectively repel all capricious and oppressive interference with the lawful exercise of their rights and liberties conferred on them by the laws of the Empire and guaranteed to them by the traditions of the British nation as well as by the reiterated assurances and pledges of the sovereign and responsible statesmen. It reflects no credit on British rule in India that after 150 years of that rule its agents should abandon, however temporarily, those administrative methods of law and constitution, of liberty and peace which alone are sanctioned by Parliament, and should resort to the odious methods of repression and rigour which have made the autocracy of Russia a standing reproach to civilisation. From what is being done in Bengal one would imagine that India was on the eve of a popular mutiny against which the authorities responsible for peaceful and lawful rule are forced to take precautionary measures. But the country is as peaceful as ever and the people are as law abiding. What then is the justification, except the incompetency of the men placed in authority over the people, for the secret as well as open use of the resources of despotic officialdom, for confidential circulars, dark espionage and for notices and proclamations prohibiting people from the lawful exercises of their constitutional rights? If the people of India cannot seek redress against what they believe to be their grievances by all such methods as the laws of the land make available to them, then British rule ceases to be a civilised rule and becomes worse than the rule of the Russian bureaucracy or of the Turkish Pachas."

The mutiny scare spread by the Anglo-Indian Press and believed by irresponsible officials on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Great Mutiny of 1857 had its first echo in the Punjab where the Government arrested Lala Lajpat Rai, Congress leader on May 9, 1907 and deported him to Mandalay.

The Lahore Correspondent wired the following story: "Mr. Lajpat Rai was arrested today at half past two o'clock. Mounted sowars with drawn swords were seen passing in front of his bungalow an hour before the arrest. Mr. Lajpat Rai was in his study when two native police inspectors appeared and said that the District Magistrate wanted him to appear in Court. Mr. Lajpat Rai ordered his carriage to be made ready. He had hardly seated himself when a large reinforcement of sowars surrounded his carriage, which was taken straight to the police office where the District Magistrate and the Divisional Commissioner were sitting. Every native was turned out of the room. The Commissioner handed over to Mr. Lajpat Rai the Governor-General in Council's order for his deportation out of British India under Regulation III of 1818. Mr. Lajpat Rai simply asked for permission to write a letter, which done he was immediately taken in a motor car to the railway station from where a special train was to carry him out of British India. Mounted cavalry are patrolling the streets and guarding all approaches to the railway station. The greatest sensation prevails among all classes of men".

Lajpat Rai's arrest and deportation had an electric effect on public opinion in Madras which neither the anti-partition agitation nor the Swadeshi movement in Bengal was successful in creating. As *The Hindu* wrote "Madras has been noted for its moderation. Madras leaders have till now been openly complimented on their level-headedness. They refrained from actively associating themselves with the agitation against partition in Bengal. In the last two Congress sessions the bulk of them did not show themselves to be in

sympathy with the boycott movement carried on with more or less success in Bengal as a retaliatory political measure Madras can now no longer be called moderate Even the mildest moderates have been during the past three days expressing themselves in the most extreme language The deportation of the Punjab leaders, the panic that has seized the local Government, the regiments of cavalry and artillery drafted into Lahore, the recourse by the Government of India to an obsolete Regulation, Mr. Morley's (Secretary of State for India) sanctioning of the same, the staggering details of the deportation and the barbarous manner in which every principle of law and justice has been violated have all operated to root out the lingering confidence of the people and those to whom they looked up generally, a confidence till now entertained and cherished amidst the most adverse surroundings and circumstances. So far as we have been able to gauge public opinion in the city and in the Presidency a silent contempt seems to have been engendered against the Government in the country everywhere, a contempt of whose outward manifestations though nothing may be seen now, of which we have no doubt the ultimate effect will be recognised to be disastrous to the best interests of the rulers and the ruled The Anglo-Indian Press are in a fool's paradise and think the best thing has been done by the Government under the circumstances Let the Government if it chooses rest with this satisfaction, but the powerful wave of feeling that is passing over the country is swelling more and more and it may become too late ere long to calm its turbulence We are flooded with communications from the mofussil speaking of unrest and excitement the action of the Government has caused. If the Government in their wisdom will ignore all this, let them"

Writing again on Lajpat Rai's deportation The Hindu said "Lala Lajpat Rai is now immured in the fortress at Mandalay The shades of the dungeon have closed over him. Mr Morley has shown the iron fist in Parliament The Government of India are carrying on their campaign of cruel wrongs A nation is looking on in philosophic despair; will no justice be done to this sincere patriot? He has been condemned. But should he not have a hearing? Is there to be no investigation, no accusation? A malicious Anglo-Indian newspaper had the temerity to insinuate the other day that Mr Lajpat Rai had command of an army of a hundred thousand desperadoes and that the threads of an elaborate and widespread campaign of sedition passed through his fingers Beyond this base accusation, if accusation it can be called, made behind his back by an irresponsible, anonymous and reckless scribbler in the Press, nothing has been heard against the man who has fallen a victim to an unexampled oppression Do the Government really believe that Mr Rai was planning to lead a rebel army to capture the fort of Lahore at the head of that army and spread his conquest far and wide over the continent?"

A Nagpur report in The Hindu on October 28, 1907, said "A curious Bande Mataram incident in a city school happened this afternoon Dr Bepin Krishna inspected the school. The boys who greeted him with cries of "Bande Mataram" were admonished. The seventh standard sections were suspended. The fifth was threatened with fine. Twenty-five boys were handed over to the police lock-up and after five hours' confinement they were released on bail Investigations are proceeding The boys unfrightened gave bold, truthful statements Great sensation prevails".

As the country passed through a period of repression and privation, the great national organisation, the Congress, which had been a passive spectator of the oppression of the people was split into two. On the eve of the Congress session in Surat in December, 1907, *The Hindu* noted the emergence of two groups in the Congress which had forced the transfer of the venue of the session from Nagpur to Surat.

*The Hindu* said: 'The differences of opinion between the two parties have become very acute of late. Since the last Congress the Government became stiffened in its resolve to disregard public opinion and to heap repressive measures upon the heads of the people. It has been a dark era of administrative reaction and of curtailment of popular rights. During this time what did the National Congress do? As a national entity it has been voiceless and powerless for good. It was silent as the grave when national rights were trampled upon by the high authority of Government and it was severely indifferent to the spectacle of individuals being persecuted by official tyranny and wrong doing. A party has sprung up in the Congress ranks the members of which have a strong conviction that the redress of public wrong is a duty which every lover of his country owes to his motherland and that self-interest and self-elevation must be sacrificed for the common good. The advent of this new spirit in Indian public life has been marked by excesses which are very regrettable. The Indian National Congress which contains the best elements in Indian society will, we have no doubt, adjust itself to the needs of the times'.

Unfortunately things did not go as smoothly at Surat as *The Hindu* had hoped. Lala Lajpat Rai, who was released from detention on November, 11, 1907, was the hero of Surat. The *Hindu* correspondent in Surat reported on December 26: "Lala Lajpat Rai arrived here this morning. Never did Surat give such a reception to anybody. Messrs. Gandhi, Gokhale and all the members of the Reception Committee were present. The railway station platform was overcrowded. His carriage was unhorsed though he objected to it and even threatened to alight down. Thousands of spectators assembled on the road. It took three hours before he reached his bungalow. Thousands garlanded the patriot. His photos were taken round. There were people on roofs, windows and trees. The extremist leaders, Messrs. Tilak, Khaparde and Aurobindo Ghoshe were conspicuous by their absence." The correspondent mentioned there were 100 delegates from Madras.

A special correspondent who covered the Congress session wrote: "The air is surcharged with strong conflicting feelings. Some are afraid of a split, others hope that concord will be maintained. All are actuated by the most sincere wish for unanimity and strength in the Congress movement. The more the two parties approach each other the more will the cloud be cleared and misapprehensions cease. Moderates are less moderate for the moment, and extremists are less extreme while the party on the margin are hopeful of bringing the two parties to a complete agreement. Of course, Mr. Tilak leads the Nationalist Party and has come in advance to put the party in order. He has already addressed two meetings. His position is this: Last year certain resolutions regarding Swaraj, Swadeshi, boycott and national education were adopted and this year Mr. Tilak says he has reasons to believe that attempts are being made to go back on these resolutions. Instead of the resolution on Swaraj of last year which laid down self-Government as obtained in the British



colonies as the goal of Indian aspiration, a fresh draft resolution now officially issued lays down as the *ultimate goal of the Congress* self-Government enjoyed by other members of the British Empire, hinting thereby that a measure of self-Government as obtained in the Crown Colonies like Ceylon, will suffice for India. And what is more the draft resolution lays down in the proposed constitution for the Congress that only such persons as subscribe to this creed shall be members of the Congress."

As every student of the Indian nationalist movement knows the Surat session of the Congress was marked by disturbances and ended in confusion. A graphic account of what happened on December 26 was given by The Hindu Correspondent in a dispatch on December 27, 1907. He said, "The proceedings of the Congress opened with the speech of the Chairman of the Reception Committee and then Dewan Bahadur Ambalal Desai proposed Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh to the Presidential Chair. His speech though brief was interrupted twice. Then Babu Surendranath Banerjee seconded the proposition. On rising he was received with cheers by the Moderates and hisses by the Extremists. At the end of every phrase there was a display of continuous rowdyism and uproar and cries of "no, no" which made it impossible for the speaker to proceed. The Chairman of the Reception Committee informed the delegates that unless Babu Surendranath Banerjee was heard he would be compelled to suspend the proceedings. Babu Surendranath Banerjee stood upon the President's table but he was again howled down by the Extremists, Madras and Nagpur nationalists taking the chief part in the inglorious proceedings. Babu Surendranath made another attempt to speak but this met with no better response than bitter rowdyism. The chairman of the Reception Committee then suspended the proceedings. There was then a quarter of an hour's interval during which consultation was held with Mr. Tilak and the Bengal delegates represented that unless Babu Surendranath was heard they would leave the Congress in a body.

"The proceedings were again resumed and Babu Surendranath again stood up but the rowdyism of the Extremists did not abate and in fact grew worse. The proceedings were then suspended for the day with cries of "shame" for those who disturbed the meeting. The uproar, confusion and unseemly behaviour that prevailed was unparalleled in the history of any great public gathering in India in the past."

Reporting on December 27, the Special Correspondent said: "Today the Congress resumed at 1 o'clock when Babu Surendranath resumed his speech from where he left yesterday and seconded the proposition proposing Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh for Presidentship moved by Mr. Ambalal Desai yesterday. There was no interruption to his speech. The proposition was supported and carried with acclamation. At this stage, Mr. Tilak came upon the platform and wanted to move an amendment to the resolution which was disallowed. The President, meantime, rose and proceeded to deliver his address, which in thousands of voices he was asked to do. Mr. Tilak would not leave the platform and persisted in attempting to speak. This confusion lasted over 10 minutes at the end of which lathis and chairs and whatever one could get hold of around the platform were thrown with the result that some have received injuries. The police came in and the gathering was dispersed.

"Earlier, as Mr Tilak persisted in standing on the platform and attempted to speak, an excited Moderate on the platform made three attempts to get at Mr. Tilak to "bundle" him out of the dais, to use his own words, but those responsible for order on the dais kept back this excited Moderate and assured the Extremists who had by this time approached the platform on a given signal by Mr Tilak that no harm would be done to Mr Tilak. Just at this moment a shoe was hurled by one of the Extremists at those sitting at the right side of the President which passed between Mr Surendranath and Sir Pherozshah Mehta, scratching the former in the cheek and hitting the latter at the neck. Simultaneously, some hot words ensued between a few Extremists and Moderates sitting below the platform which resulted in the Extremists attacking the latter with lathis with which most Extremists came armed to the pavilion. A sudden rush was then made by the Extremists to ascend the platform to get at the leaders there who perceiving the situation began to move towards the back exit but not before the President suspended the proceedings for the day. As the President was moving, a few Extremists managed to get on the platform and tried to hit the President, Sir Pherozshah and Mr. Surendranath but the blows were warded off by those who were escorting the leaders and who had therefore to bear the brunt and receive the blows levelled at these veteran leaders. With great difficulty they were safely taken to the President's tent behind the pavilion while the ladies who were present were escorted by certain members of the Reception Committee and taken to the tent adjoining the President's. Their safety was ensured while the leaders and delegates were trying to escape from the scene.

"Inside it was one of the wildest confusion, uproar and rowdiness which created for the moment a feeling of insecurity in the minds of all present. Lathis were freely used by the Extremists at any one they met and a hand to hand fight then ensued which culminated in chairs being thrown at one another and in several being injured though slightly. Among those who escorted the President from the pavilion was Mr Pears, European representative of the Times of India who had come to report the Congress proceedings to his paper and he was rudely handled so much that he had to be taken to an out-patient tent where he was attended to. He was able after 10 minutes to leave the place being none the worse for the assault on him. A reign of terror and rowdiness prevailed for a few minutes inside the pavilion and the police who were very soon on the spot in great strength entered the pavilion and took possession of the House.

"Mr. Tilak after leaving the pavilion proceeded to the tent where the Poona delegates were accommodated and harangued them for a few minutes. The fiasco at the pavilion is considered a premeditated one and from what one saw and heard there was not the least doubt that the Extremists were determined to bring about and did succeed in bringing about the terrible results which were witnessed today".

The Correspondent reported that later 200 Congressmen from various provinces met and decided it was no longer possible for Extremists and Moderates to combine together and it was decided to hold a convention at which a committee would be appointed to devise a constitution for the future organisation.

The Hindu was grieved at the incidents and blamed the Extremists for them "It is much to be regretted", it said, "that the members of the Extremist Party in the Congress have justified the worst fears which were expressed regarding their mischievous activities at yesterday's sitting of the Congress. It is difficult to understand the extraordinary perversity which has actuated the conduct of the Extremists Mr Tilak and other prominent men of the Extremist Party cannot under the circumstances be acquitted of active complicity in the hooliganism which caused the dissolution of the Congress meeting yesterday. Any body of people may hold opinions on matters of general interest which may or may not be acceptable to other sections of the public The methods of propagating their views ought not, it is needless to add, to transgress ordinary principles of decorum and fairplay It seems to us that the members of the Extremist Party have most completely played into the hands of their opponents by their conduct in making yesterday's Congress meeting impossible For the moment they and their principles stand discredited before the country"

In another comment on the exhibition of violence at Surat The Hindu wrote. "It is, we think, vandalism of the most inglorious and wicked sort on the part of any man or body of men to sow in it (the Congress) the germs of dissension and dissolution. It is a matter of deepest regret that the national organisation should be split up into two irreconcilable fragments We can scarcely believe that the difference in political principles were of such vital and uncompromising nature that time and argument could not be fairly expected to contribute to an amicable and workable understanding between the two parties" The Hindu, however, criticised the draft resolution against which the Extremists had protested and said "With great deference to those of our Indian leaders who have framed the draft resolution, we are of opinion that as framed it does constitute an attempt to go back upon some of the principles which have been affirmed by previous Congresses. This we consider is a great blunder".

Following the Surat Congress fiasco, The Hindu received a large volume of letters from adherents of both groups and it said: "Considerations of space have compelled us not to insert all the communications which have been sent to us on the subject but we think we owe no apology to any section of our readers for having published as many as we have because the nature of the correspondence reveals the extent and depth of public feeling in the matter and no organ which seeks to reflect public opinion instead of limiting the discharge of its duty to its own oracular utterances should, in our opinion, shut its columns to the free and intelligent expression of opinion on public questions".

The Hindu concluded from the letters it had published that they revealed the "wide influence which the principles of the new Party have secured in the minds of the intelligent portion of the people" The Hindu analysed the statements issued by both parties in connection with the incidents at Surat and held Tilak and his followers responsible for them. It said: "It speaks little for the political acumen of Mr Tilak and his sturdy sense of patriotism to which we had given him credit that he should have instigated a course of action on the part of his followers tending to this result. When the leaders of a party deliberately sanction a policy of obstruction, those among the rank and file may be trusted to carry it to unseemly and dangerous lengths. If Mr Tilak who met with only rebuffs, according to his statement, in his effort to obtain a

reasonable compromise with the leaders of the Moderate Party, had cared less for personal prestige but more for the principles of his party he would have done well to allow the Moderate Party to get their constitution resolution passed by their scratch majority. We venture to think that in the result that resolution would have received very little moral support from the general public, but the Nationalist Party would have received from every place in the country an accession of strength as regards its creed which the Moderate Party would not have been in a position to disregard"

**W**E MUST NOW go back to late in 1906 to record a great bank crash which put The Hindu on its mettle as the champion of the common man and the public interest

On October 22, 1906, The Hindu carried the following news paragraph on page 3 under the heading, "Messrs Arbuthnot and Co" "Mr C. F Napier, instructed by Messrs Orr David and Brightwell, moved before His Lordship Mr Justice Boddam, Commissioner of the Insolvent Court, for the admission of the petition of Messrs Arbuthnot and Co. to be declared insolvents. Mr Napier stated that the cause of insolvency was stoppage of payment by the firm of Messrs P Macfadyen and Co in London, unexpected calls of large sums of money in Madras held by the petitioners on deposit and the lock up of their funds in assets which were not immediately realisable and some of which had heavily depreciated in value. His Lordship admitted the petition, made the usual vesting order and granted six weeks time to file the schedule"

The Hindu described the scene at the Madras office of Arbuthnot and Co where a notice had been put up announcing suspension of payments "Since Saturday last there has been a great commotion in Madras. The anguish of the disappointed creditors can be more imagined than described. A regular panic had taken hold of them and a rush was made to the High Court where it was understood an application would be made for the taking of insolvency proceedings"

The Hindu said "The consequences of this sudden and disastrous failure of Messrs Arbuthnot and co will be as serious as they are far reaching. It means the ruin of many hundreds of families in Southern India. The firm was the most popular one in Madras until the new firm, Arbuthnot Industries, was started. At this time there was a shrewd suspicion in the minds of some that all was not as it should be. But the public confidence in the integrity of the firm was so great that its transactions did not in any way suffer. An enormous business was being done and vast sums of money belonging to Maharajas, Rajas, and Zamindars, the well-to-do official classes, the Governments of native states, public charitable endowments and private trusts, mutual benefit funds and Nidhis, besides the small hard earned investments of the earning classes were all there. To the vast majority of the investors who with their helpless dependants can be counted by the thousands in Southern India, the insolvency of

the firm is a calamity which might well nigh mean their ruin. At present the feeling is one of general consternation in the city and as the news spread over the Presidency, the extent of suffering can be realised. It will be years before the large body of our countrymen who have been affected by the sudden blow can hope to recover from its effects. To the confiding public it had seemed that the solvency of Arbuthnot and Co. was almost as stable as the British Government itself. It cannot be gainsaid that the prestige of the British capitalist and his reputation for integrity and right dealing had been associated in men's minds with the long established name of Arbuthnot and Co. in Madras. We have not yet got the details relating to this huge catastrophe but in the case of a misfortune of such magnitude one is impelled to ask why steps have either not been taken or why it was considered futile to attempt to keep the concern floating by financial expedients till fair weather should set in. The public are entitled to expect from the members of the firm a speedy, fair and full disclosure of all the antecedent circumstances relating to their bankruptcy. Their application for three months time for the purpose of filing a schedule did not come with good grace from them."

The Hindu reported on October 23 that Mr. Macfadyen, the leading partner of the firm in England, had committed suicide and said "The public will be shocked to hear that a man who was at the head of a firm of merchants who enjoyed for such a long period and in such abundant measure their whole-hearted confidence and respect, should not only have caused the wreck of so many homes and unspeakable anguish in many households but has closed his inglorious career by an act of supreme selfishness and cowardice. The London Times rightly says that the event will produce an unfortunate moral effect in India. It will be true to say that it is sufficient to blast for a long time to come the reputation of Englishmen for probity and righteousness. Since yesterday we have been receiving harrowing accounts of innumerable instances of the little all that people, young and old, had possessed, having been engulfed in this catastrophe. Under the present circumstances, the plain duty of the partners of the firm is by all means in their power to allay the public excitement, indignation and alarm by an honest and open statement of all the circumstances which have led to the disaster and to endeavour to realise the assets and make the best reparation possible to the creditors".

In the next few days the columns of The Hindu were filled with letters from victims of the crash. One man said he had put all his savings in the bank and all the ready cash in the current account and devoted himself to Yoga research which had made him physically weak. The crash left him penniless and he and his children were rendered paupers. He wanted sympathisers to find him work with which he could sustain himself and the children. Another reader suggested the starting of an Indian bank now that European integrity and honesty came under a cloud. The Hindu heartily welcomed the idea and later helped in the birth of the Indian Bank, which is now one of the nationalised banks.

The great debate on the failure of the Arbuthnot and Co. continued in The Hindu for many weeks and The Hindu itself wrote almost daily editorials on the crash. Among the suggestions made was one by V. Krishanswami Aiyer for a commission of enquiry which was supported by The Hindu.

Among the letters was one which said: "I am one of those who have suffered an appreciable loss by the failure of Messrs. Arbuthnot & Co. I have taken

some pains to ascertain the feelings of the Indian creditors. I am glad to be able to say that there is not the remotest inclination to connect the fair name of Englishmen with the disastrous results of the great catastrophe. They very correctly understand their position and do not accuse the British Government of an insidious desire to impoverish Indians by this indirect means. In spite of all that is said and written to the contrary by some impulsive people the general body of Indian creditors maintain in an admirable degree their equanimity of temper. There is absolutely no desire to make political capital out of this great calamity. They will be exceedingly sorry if their representatives say or do anything to alienate the sympathies of the Government or their English fellow subjects at this great crisis."

The Hindu writing on November 5, 1906, refuted the charge that by persisting in espousing the claims of the creditors of Arbuthnot & Co it was creating racial animosity. It said, "At the risk of seeming wearisome to some of our readers and of incurring the further displeasure of some worthy members of the Anglo-Indian community who detect in our action sinister designs of arousing racial animosity, we have to recur to the subject of the insolvency of Arbuthnot & Co again and again. The degree of misery and excitement which it has caused among the public will be apparent upon a perusal of our correspondence columns from day to day. We publish today several contributions from gentlemen in Madras and in the mofussil of position and experience, official and non-official, whose earnestness, sobriety and moderation of judgment it would be vain to attempt to deny. The fact seems to be that the larger portion of the money which has been swallowed up in the catastrophe belongs to the Indian investors. But be the creditors, Indian or European, it is to the common interest of all to sift the whole matter to the bottom and to find out the true cause of the collapse of this firm which has involved so many families in ruin."

The trial in August, 1907, of Sir George Arbuthnot, a partner of the firm, before Chief Justice Sir Charles Arnold of the Madras High Court on charges of falsification of accounts, misappropriation of Bank's funds and other offences was fully reported in *The Hindu*. Mr. E. B. Powell, Public Prosecutor, conducted the prosecution while Mr. Eardley Norton defended the accused. On September 27, Sir George Arbuthnot was convicted for breach of trust and sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment.

Commenting on the sentence *The Hindu* said: "It would have been a scandal of the gravest kind in the administration of justice if the chief partners of this firm had escaped condign punishment for their grave crime of deluding and defrauding the investing public."

Meanwhile, the Official Assignee's statement revealed that because of several dubious operations extending over many years, the company had been insolvent for several years. According to the auditors appointed by the official Assignee, the liabilities of the firm stood at roughly Rs. 277.5 lakhs while the assets amounted roughly to Rs. 76 lakhs. The Hindu's comment on this was "For a dozen years now, the business of Messrs. Arbuthnot & Co. has been a swindle of the vilest description. The firm has kept on a banking business under false pretences, decoying innumerable innocent men and women into investing in its rapacious maw all their hard earned savings and earnings, moneys which the members of the firm could have had no reasonable prospect of repaying in full. How many widows, orphans, old pensioners, Government

officials and others have been lured into the net of the pretended pompousness of this firm to deposit their moneys in, not knowing that Messrs Arbuthnot & Co was but a white sepulchre?'

Moved by the strong criticism of Government's inaction, the Governor of Madras, Sir Arthur Lawley, who was himself one of the victims of the Bank's failure, opened a fund to relieve urgent cases of distress resulting from the crash. Though many of the hidden resources of the company were brought to light, these did not amount to much in the aggregate and the depositors had to suffer the loss of the bulk of their savings

A sidelight on the bank crash was the part played by the Editor of the Hindu, Kasturiranga Iyengar in saving the Mylapore Permanent Fund from ruin and closure. At the time of the Arbuthnot crash, Kasturiranga was the President of the Fund. But fortunately there was not a single pie belonging to the fund with Arbuthnots. Kasturiranga and his predecessor in office had sagaciously withdrawn all the fund's moneys from the failing Bank. But still panicky depositors started a run on the Fund and there was not enough cash with the Fund to meet the demand. Kasturiranga came to the rescue by meeting the demand from his own purse (by investing enough sums of his money in fixed deposits with the Fund) and thus restored confidence in the security of the fund.

Early in 1906 Madras saw a royal visit in the person of the Prince of Wales (later King George V) and his wife and in the words of The Hindu the capital city was "enfete and on all sides were to be seen manifestations of a true spirit of loyal and spontaneous desire to offer to the Royal visitors a right hearty welcome on their arrival on these shores". The Hindu report continued "With no pretensions to natural beauty or attraction at the point of landing, the citizens of Madras were not slow to conceive the idea of doing the best they could to make the first impression on Their Royal Highnesses as good as might be under the circumstances. The new jetty recently constructed was selected as 'being the most suitable for purposes of decoration and also for general convenience as a stage for the landing of the royal party. The pier which is about 150 yards long was entirely covered with a roofing chastely draped in white with gold fringes and this formed a canopy under which Their Royal Highnesses passed on to a spacious enclosure decorated most gaily and artistically through the exertions of Messrs Wrenn Bennet and Co. A striking feature of the decoration inside were the handsome strings of rose garlands which added extra beauty and charm to the bunting. Rehearsal after rehearsal only tended to familiarise everyone with their place and position on the occasion of the Royal arrival, so that the whole proceedings of the evening were not marred by any errors of omission and commission which would have disturbed a thoroughly orderly function. The booming of three guns from the ramparts of the Fort St. George announced to the anxious crowds of spectators that the Renown had been sighted at sea. A patient wait of almost an hour and then the Renown and the entire squadron of battleships escorting the Royal party entered the harbour".

The report then mentioned the landing of the Royal visitors and said "Their Royal Highnesses looked quite refreshed and braced by the few days of voyage across the bay after a stupendous tour they had already accomplished on railways inland". The report described the introduction and the presentation of addresses by the Municipality of Madras and the Prince of Wales'



short reply The royal visitors then left for their residence in a procession which was mentioned in detail by The Hindu including the number of carriages and their position in the procession and their occupants The Hindu said "There is a consensus of opinion that the crowd which thronged to witness the royal cortege and who lined the roads right through from the harbour to the Government House were denser than any previously known in the history of Madras and certainly not less than a lakh of people were on the streets. It was evident also that though the Madrassi was not as a rule accustomed to giving vocal expression of satisfaction, there was on every hand indications of pleasure and of a quiet respectful welcome to the royal visitors. The lanes and alleys leading from the route of the royal procession were choked with a flood of humanity and the highways with a living mass which rendered passage well nigh impossible"

Almost 15 years later another Prince of Wales visited Madras and then he was boycotted by the people as an expression of protest against the policy of the British Government. We shall speak more of this in another chapter.

The Prince of Wales' visit coincided with a request by a reader for an Indian hotel which apparently was not to be found in Madras The reader in a letter to The Hindu spoke of the difficulties of Hindu gentlemen visiting Madras with their families not being able to find boarding and lodging which Europeans are provided with and suggested: "A hotel for Hindu gentlemen maintained like those for Europeans will be a great boon to the thousands who visit Madras all the year round Such an institution will be very popular and the concern will be a paying one if only it is properly worked The hotel must be a fit place for gentlemen to stay in with their families if need be and must, among other things, provide for the following (1) Decent meals provided by caste servants with due regard to caste scruples, (2) a room or set of rooms properly furnished for each visitor to be occupied during his stay; (3) A servant to wait upon each visitor and to take care of his things during his stay in the hotel; (4) Carriages for hire when the visitors have to go out on business or for sightseeing I hope that someone with a speculative turn of mind and some capital will take up this suggestion and give effect to it"

An Indian student who went to Japan to learn glass making relying on the promise of patrons in Bellary and nearby places wrote to The Hindu a pathetic letter on June 13, 1906, from Tokyo He said. "The art is very promising and a business could be opened on a small scale there. I am to stop here for one year and some small art and industry could be learnt in six months more. I fear I will not be able to stop here as I don't find any signs of getting money either from my people or my patrons. Will you please write and agitate on my behalf and secure me some money as a loan or any form of borrowing or begging and oblige".

The Editor's note under the letter said. "We deeply sympathise with Rama Row (the writer of the letter). Those who promised him help while he was here are bound to fulfil their promise and help him in his present difficulty. We do not see why Rama Row should conceal the identity of his patrons if what he says of them is true. Cannot Mr. Bhavanachari help the young man from his sea voyage fund?

P. Kesava Pillai writing from Gooty said: "Mr. Samjee Rama Row is worthy of the kindly support you have so generously accorded him in your footnote to his

plaintive appeal" Kesava Pillai who confessed he was one of the patrons who had not been able to do much for Rama Row because of illness urged The Hindu to start a subscription list and acknowledge contributions in The Hindu. The Hindu said in a footnote: "We shall be extremely glad to do so provided there is ready and suitable response to the appeal".

The Hindu started a fund the next day in aid of the Indian student in Japan with a donation of Rs 100 by M Venkateswara Rao of Nuzvid. There was a letter from G. Harisarvothama Rao who mentioned his collections in Vijayawada and other places on behalf of Rama Row and the small amount which he had been able to send to Rama Row by money order. A reader from Harpanahalli wrote of benefit performances being organised in his place in aid of Rama Row and a third reader suggested a one-rupee fund be started all over the presidency to help Rama Row.

But nothing more was heard in The Hindu of the fund or of Rama Row, giving the impression that the matter failed to evoke interest.

The frequent use of the word 'Native' by Indians themselves and especially by the Indian Press including The Hindu (in the days of G. Subramania Aiyer) provoked a European reader to ask The Hindu about it. "I should like", he wrote, "to elicit an authoritative statement from those concerned through the medium of your paper on the use of the word 'Natives' as applied to your countrymen. I have seen suggestions that they do not like the word. But I read an article in a newspaper published by your countrymen in this town in which the words 'Native' and 'native press' were used in the way in which we Europeans are accustomed to use them".

The Hindu's reply to the query was: "In our opinion the word "Indian" will be accepted as a proper designation by our countrymen. It has indeed been the one which has been in common use for some time now by all those who feel the "discourtesy" implied in using the word "Native".

The Hindu accorded a right royal welcome to the British Labour member of Parliament, Mr. James Keir Hardie, when he visited Madras in November, 1907. A two column picture of Mr. Hardie was published on the leader page (a very unusual thing for The Hindu to do), with the following caption: "Mr. James Keir Hardie, M.P., one of Nature's gentlemen". There was a long report of the reception accorded to him at the Central Railway Station. "Long before the train arrived", the report said, "large crowds had collected at the railway station both in and outside to greet the great Englishman who had taken such a warm and affectionate interest in the affairs of his Indian fellow countrymen. As soon as the train arrived lusty shouts of "Bande Mataram" welcomed the genial old man who returned the greetings. He was received on alighting by members of the Mahajana Sabha and garlanded".

Describing the scene at the hotel on Mount Road where he stayed the report said: "It was indeed a remarkable sight to see Mr. Hardie, one of nature's gentlemen, as he had been described, with frankness, honesty and sympathy beaming out from every corner of that face, worn out indeed with all the toils of a life — both physical and intellectual, but with an overhanging forehead severe as ever a philosopher carried above his shoulders — sitting up straight from a by no means comfortable railway journey, and ordering his food to be brought into the drawing room because he would not keep his friends waiting. The conversation was not open to the Press but we may characterise it as the

sanest, most thoughtful and critical estimate of the Indian situation that any consummate Indian statesman could utter. Who could have thought that this serene and peaceful old man whose quiet dignity and open manners endear him to all who come in contact with him, whose intelligence and shrewdness guide his enthusiasm so thoroughly and discreetly, who could have thought that the simple and noble soul would drive even a hysterical and an ultra sensational Press so mad unless the investigation of truth is at a discount in these degenerate days"?

The Hindu representative who interviewed the Labour M P asked him about his impressions of the conditions in native states as compared to British India. Keir Hardie replied "There is more contentment in native states than in the British provinces. The peasant in the native states is better off and there is also more general contentment among the people". He was then asked for his opinion on the general unrest in the country. He said "The unrest and discontent are, in my opinion, two-fold. The first is that among the peasants which is distinctly economic and is due to economic causes. The second is that among the middle and the better classes which is due partly to political causes and partly economic".

He said in reply to another question: "You should not identify yourselves with any particular party. In order to secure help for your country you must make converts in all parties. The one thing necessary is to educate public opinion in England which is so ignorant of Indian affairs".

Writing on Keir Hardie's visit The Hindu said "The people of India are not so foolish as to believe that any great practical and immediate fruits would result from the tour in India even of a man of so keen and well-disciplined intellect as Mr. Keir Hardie but in the present state of public mind in Great Britain towards India which is in a dark gloom of ignorance and prejudice, it is above all essential that a true presentation of facts from first-hand knowledge should be made".

In another editorial on the eve of Keir Hardie's departure from India The Hindu said: "Short as his sojourn in India has been, Mr. Hardie has pierced to the heart of many Indian questions and has acquired a more than superficial knowledge of the country and its people. He has evidently been much struck by the manner in which he has been received by Indians of all classes wherever he has travelled and that his opinion of the people, of their capacity, and virtues is much higher than that of the average Anglo-Indian is attested by his kindly observation that whenever Indian questions come to be debated in England his influence and voice will always be thrown on the side of the Indian people". During his stay in Madras Keir Hardie paid a visit to Farm House, residence of Kasturiranga Iyengar and had tea with him. The Editor of The Hindu garlanded his visitor who was accompanied by V. S. Srinivasa Sastru.

Almost one of the earliest Hindu editorials on Mahatma Gandhi was when he and his followers were facing trial in the Transvaal (South Africa) in January, 1908, for his passive resistance movement to assert the rights of Indians settled there. Gandhiji had earlier kept in touch with The Hindu by sending it communications on the progress of his fight with the Government which the paper published but a real tribute such as the following came much later: "As a man of action Mr. Gandhi has shown himself capable of an energy, power of

organisation, undaunted courage and patriotism which in the service of the country are sorely needed at the present hour".

Three years later (May 26, 1911) *The Hindu* wrote with pride on the successful termination of the struggle waged by Gandhiji in South Africa "We believe", *The Hindu* said, "there is no other Indian in modern India than Mr Gandhi who has shown such courage, suffered such wrongs, exhibited such a truly Indian virtue of humility throughout and carried, as we hope, to a successful issue a most magnificent and remarkable struggle with the help of his devoted band of countrymen. In our opinion a public recognition of Mr Gandhi's great services to India is already overdue. No doubt as Mr. Gandhi has often so handsomely acknowledged, Indians at home contributed their mite towards the relief of their brethren in South Africa and have always sympathised with them in their troubles. But the time has come for all India to show her appreciation of Mr Gandhi in a manner which shall be in keeping with the magnitude of the task which he has performed and the success which he has achieved. It need hardly be said that all classes and communities in India will co-operate most heartily in honouring Mr Gandhi and we trust a movement will soon be started to give practical shape to this unanimous feeling of love and gratitude"

But the battle had not been won in South Africa as people in India thought and *The Hindu* published reports of resumption of passive resistance movement by Gandhiji in October, 1913 and said "Reports are now arriving daily of sentences of rigorous imprisonment passed on passive resisters and this time there is every possibility of the movement not only spreading widely — for women and children are to throw in their lot with adults — but the risk, dangers and sufferings attendant on the struggle being severer and more taxing than on the last occasion. Great responsibility therefore attaches to Indians here in the way of enabling the handful of South African British Indians to wage the war to the end by extending to them every kind of help"

An appeal for help to the Indian satyagrahis in South Africa was also made by C. Rajagopalachari, who writing under his initials "C.R." for the first time to *The Hindu* from Salem quoted a French couplet. "Will you give only tears! Brother! we gave you blood in past years". C. R. added: "Now that the first act of passive resistance has been telegraphed to us what is our immediate duty? If we have any honour left, we should not merely give our tears and admire the tactful and sympathetic speeches and articles of great Englishmen, but meet in every town and city, collect funds for the support of the martyrs who have once again resolved to fight without shedding the people's blood"

*The Hindu* opened a relief fund in aid of Indians in South Africa and among the first contributions announced was that of S. Srinivasa Iyengar who gave Rs 500 and promised another Rs 500.

A Rangaswami Iyengar who was assisting his uncle as Assistant Editor and also Manager of *The Hindu* became the Printer and Publisher of the paper in October, 1907 and retained that post till he left *The Hindu* temporarily in 1915. From 1907 there was a steady increase in the number of pages of *The Hindu* and it went up on occasions to 22 which was a far cry to the days when it had to be content with eight. The business side prospered with more and consistent advertisers coming forward to patronise the paper and generally a new look was given to it with better arrangement of news and features and better

display of telegrams, domestic and foreign, whose greater volume made it necessary to distribute them over two or more pages under the general heading, "Telegrams", which greeted the reader from the top of half a dozen columns. The paper was slowly having a shape and character of its own which developed more surely and systematically in later years and became its strong point with readers. The Hindu crest of lion and unicorn which was to remain till 1934, appeared on the leader page on August 1, 1906.

The Hindu did publish some improbable stories some times, more probably for their curiosity than for their truth. A sample. "A correspondent writes from Bellary: A swami from the Himalayas is here. Boys pelt stones at him and the stones turn into silver and copper coins. He sprinkles leaves which become flowers."

Here is another story with The Hindu's comment. The report which came from Texas (U.S.A.) spoke of a cure for cold. "All that is required of the patient is that he shall stand in the open air with his body bare of clothing and let the falling rain pour on him. For nervous diseases and rheumatism the treatment is described by a *Telegraph* correspondent as infallible. One good down-pour of rain has cured scores of obstinate colds. A rain bath would tempt anybody these days. If it really brings freedom from rheumatism, cold and nerves — to say nothing of beauty to the complexion — it may prove an attraction sufficient to undermine the respectability of the suburbs and set Mrs. Grundy on the warpath again."

# Morley's Reforms

18

**T**HE YEAR 1908 was a year of discontent and unrest in India and it was also a year of constitutional reforms. Mr John Morley was the Secretary of State for India and The Hindu had great admiration for his intellect and ability but it felt these qualities were not evident in relation to affairs of India where in conjunction with Lord Minto, the Viceroy, a reactionary policy was being pursued. Added to this Morley's dictum with regard to British aim in India shocked The Hindu.

The Hindu said. "The reactionary spirit which is ruling the country has found its most recent and outward expression in the statement of Mr Morley as Secretary of State for India that as far as his intellectual vision could reach the Government of this country must be personal and despotic. It is idle to deny that so unambiguous a statement of a vital administrative principle from a radical Secretary of State, a man of the most cultured mind and enlightened sympathies in all matters not pertaining to India, has shattered the belief of many thoughtful men in India in the essential purity of purpose and progressive character of the British Government. We deem it of the highest importance that a strong protest should be made against the enunciation of a doctrine which we hold to be pernicious to good Government and which makes the gravest reflection against the civilised capacity of an ancient race. If as is frequently dinned into our ears the people of India are not fit for immediate self-government it is at the same time monstrous to lay down that they never will be so and to frame a system of government by which an "irreducible minimum" of men of foreign race should lord it over the country and keep it as a dumping ground for all time. Whatever may be the depth of Mr. Morley's political study and political philosophy we refuse to believe that he was a good political seer when he gave utterance to so dangerous a doctrine as that we have referred to above"

The Newspapers Act was passed by the Imperial Legislative Council in June, 1908 and The Hindu said: "A terrible means has been devised for the strangling of newspapers in this country. An undesirable newspaper may now be effectively killed by any District Magistrate, its press, plant, machinery and tools and every printing or other material connected with it confiscated and the very name of the paper obliterated for ever. It has only to be made out that the paper contained an 'incitement to any violence' and woe to the owner and proprietor

of the press in which the paper was printed. Violence may easily be made to mean resistance and resistance to include passive resistance which latter expression may mean anything to constitute an act of violence which term the Act has left carefully undefined"

A chief victim of the Government's repressive policy was Lokmanya Tilak who was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on a charge of sedition in July, 1908 by a Bombay judge. The Hindu commented on the prejudiced attitude of the Parsi judge, Mr. Davar, who prolonged the court proceedings till 10 p.m. "having predetermined what the punishment on the accused should be". It is also a wonderful concatenation of events in this most sensational state trial when by a stretch of his judicial prerogative, Mr. Justice Davar prolonged the trial last night to so late an hour as 10 o' clock and sentenced Mr. Tilak to transportation for six years. In order that he may be out of the country for some little time, a steamer was found at once in readiness at the harbour to which Mr. Tilak was removed. All lovers of constitutional progress and good Government in the country will look upon the result in Mr. Tilak's case with dismay."

Reporting the case and the judgment The Hindu quoted Tilak as saying in reply to a question "It may be the will of providence that the cause which I advocate will prosper more by my suffering"

Mr. Justice Davar in his judgment told Tilak who was prosecuted for sedition arising out of his article in his paper *Mahratta*: "You are a man of undoubted talents, of great power and influence. These talents and that influence if you used them for the good of your country, would have been instrumental in bringing about a great deal of happiness for those very people whose cause you espouse. It seems to me that it must be a diseased, most perverted mind that can think that the articles you have written are legitimate articles in political agitation. They preach violence, they speak of murders with approval and that cowardly and atrocious act of committing murders by bomb seems to meet with your approval, but you hail the advent of the bomb in India as if something had come to this country for its good. Your hatred of the ruling class has not disappeared during the last 10 years and these articles were deliberately and defiantly written week after week"

May, 1908 was the month of terrorist activities in Bengal with the cult of the bomb much in evidence. The Hindu condemned the anarchist activity which it said was alien to Indian soil. Aurobindo Ghose was implicated in one of the many bomb cases and Eardley Norton was the Government Prosecutor against him. The Hindu carried on appeal by Sarojini Ghose, Aurobindo's sister, for funds to defend her brother. She said as her brother had taken "the vow of poverty in the service of the motherland he has no means to engage the service of any eminent barrister at law".

When Aurobindo was acquitted after a trial lasting over a year he wrote a letter to the Editor of The Hindu thanking his friends who sent him messages of support and sympathy. He said "Will you kindly allow me to express through your columns my deep sense of gratitude to all who have helped me in my hour of trial? Of the innumerable friends, known and unknown, who have contributed each his mite to swell my defence fund it is impossible for me now even to learn the names and I must ask them to accept this public expression of my feelings in place of a private gratitude. Since my acquittal many telegrams and

letters of congratulations have reached me and they are too numerous for me to reply to them individually. The love which my countrymen have heaped on me in return for the little I have been able to do for them amply repays any apparent trouble or misfortune my public activity may have brought upon me. I attribute my escape to no human agency but first of all to the protection of the Mother of us all who has never been absent from me but always held me in her arms and shielded me from grief and disaster and secondarily to the prayers of thousands which have been going up to Her on my behalf ever since I was arrested. If it is the love of my countrymen which led me into danger it is also the love of my countrymen which has brought me safe through it." Shortly after this letter was published in May, 1908, it was reported from Calcutta that Aurobindo was not to be found in his house and that a search was on. The search ended long afterwards in Pondicherry where Aurobindo renounced politics and became a spiritual teacher.

The fire of nationalism and love of the motherland which was engulfing the country spread to the south also and found expression in the distant port town of Tuticorin where proceedings were started against V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva and Padmanabha Iyengar for keeping the peace. The action was taken in connection with meetings and processions organised to celebrate the release of the Bengal patriot, Bepin Chandra Pal. V. O. Chidambaram Pillai himself wired to *The Hindu* a report of the proceedings against him. In subsequent hearings, these patriots were refused bail and they were not given adequate time either to move the High Court. They were remanded in custody. As a protest a hartal was observed in Tinnevely and Palayamcottah and there were disturbances at the latter place in which five persons were shot dead (the report did not say by whom). It was altogether a scrappy report of the important events and *The Hindu* the next day wrote a long leader about it. It said (on March 16, 1908): "A full account of the tragedy which occurred at Tinnevely appears in our columns today. By reason of the scant courtesy shown to this journal by the telegraph authorities in comparison with the privileges which are readily conceded to Anglo-Indian journals, we were unable to publish a telegram detailing the incidents which took place on Friday in our Saturday's issue. The most grievous and melancholy part of the incidents which took place on Friday is without doubt the shooting dead of four persons by order of the District Magistrate."

*The Hindu* while deploring the excesses committed by the mob said: "It seems to us taking all things together, that the mob was in a state in which they could easily have been made amenable to reason by persuasion and conciliatory methods and so far as we can see no attempt of this kind was made by any of the European high officials present."

Incidentally, perhaps because of the emotionally surcharged atmosphere, both the Tuticorin Correspondent and the Sub-Editor who tasted his copy allowed this highly defamatory paragraph in a report of a political case to appear: "The Magistrate has not been fair to the accused and has passed some remarks against some of them. The magistrate has gone out of his way to justify the quartering of punitive police."

An echo of the disturbances and the sentences imposed on patriots in Tinnevely district was heard two years later when a young Brahmin, Vanchi Aiyer, shot dead Ashe, Collector of Tinnevely, at Maniachi railway



junction and himself committed suicide. Ashe was Sub-Collector of Tuticorin when the proceedings against V O Chidambaram Pillai and others were instituted and during subsequent disturbances he became unpopular. The Hindu called it the "most wanton and unprovoked outrage which has upto now been recorded in the history of these disgraceful outrages that have tarnished the fair name of the country before the civilised world. The noxious growth of anarchical crime so entirely foreign to the instincts, sentiments and cherished convictions of the people of the land is not, it is to be hoped, entering into this peaceful presidency. It is the duty of the people, as much as that of the Government to strive their best to see that it does not obtain a foothold in this presidency"

In the troubled atmosphere of the country the move to hold a Congress session in Madras in December was opposed by many people in September, 1908 and The Hindu was also of the same view. While the Provincial Congress Committee began making preparations and even formed a Reception Committee, a protest was made over the signatures of some leaders saying that the "holding of the Congress at this juncture in Madras would harm the interests of the country"

The Hindu said that the country in general was in a disturbed and unquiet condition. "The occasional outbreaks of lawlessness in various parts of the country keep the rulers in an uneasy and suspicious temper. What are the numerous calls for public expression of loyalty but proofs of this symptom? This is a time when perhaps more than ordinarily cordial commingling of popular forces with Government agencies in all directions possible would be fruitful of good to the Government and the people". The Hindu said it awaited "with pleasurable expectation the celebration of the jubilee of the Magna Carta of India (Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858) on November 2 next when the representatives of all classes, creeds and interests will unite together and stand on a common platform; such an event in the lives of the people cannot but conduce to social harmony and orderly progress. We heartily wish that such occasions could be multiplied. We hope that the day on which the schemes of reforms in the administration, which Lord Morley has now in his melting pot, are announced, will be made a day of rejoicing by all classes throughout India"

The Hindu asked if they could make the Congress session a success when the country was still in an unsettled frame of mind and the reforms still under consideration. The paper also drew attention to the widespread official attempt to isolate the Mahomedan community from the rest of the body politic. "The bulk of their co-religionists are tempted by the prospect of special rewards and prizes as the price of keeping in isolation from the rest of the population", The Hindu said.

The Moderates however held the Congress session in Madras in December under the presidentship of Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh whose attack on the Nationalists in his presidential address was strongly criticised by The Hindu. The Madras session which was attended by all leading Moderates like Gokhale, Pherozshah Mehta and Surendranath Banerji was fully reported by The Hindu which gave extensive coverage to the three-day proceedings.

The misgivings expressed by The Hindu about the attitude of the Muslims, tempted by official rewards and prizes, found expression in an editorial in

January, 1909 when it reviewed the proceedings of the Muslim League held in Amritsar. It said: "The demand for special representation of Mahomedans has been adversely criticised on the score that it is an attempt to set one religion against another and thereby to create a counterpoise to the influence of the educated middle class among the Hindus. Such criticism would certainly receive the strongest support in case the Government should yield to the demand pressed in such strong terms by the League. It is one thing that the feeling of our Mahomedan fellow citizens in regard to separate representation should be respected and as far as possible that it should be in their powers to seek to send representatives from their own community but it is decidedly reactionary and inimical to the very interests which they seek to promote if they insist upon having special representation so as to divide themselves off from their Hindu fellow citizens and provide for themselves air-tight compartments of electorates. They will in the result find that such a system of representation and election would hamper their freedom of action in political affairs far more seriously than they imagine"

But The Hindu forgot that Lord Minto had already conceded the principle of separate representation to Muslims when an influential deputation of that community led by the Aga Khan waited on him in Simla in October, 1906. The Simla Correspondent of *The Hindu* reported the event thus: "The Mahomedan address to the Viceroy was presented to him this morning. The ball room was specially prepared for the ceremony and chairs were placed both for the delegates and the spectators. There were 34 delegates present. At the head of the row sat H. H. the Aga Khan in a silver chair specially provided for him. By 11.15 the Viceroy attended by his A.D.C.s, Military and Private Secretaries, entered the ball room. The members of the deputation were presented to him by the Aga Khan. His Excellency then ascended the dais and took his seat on the throne and the presentation ceremony began. Khaliqa Sahib of Patiala begged permission for the Aga Khan to read the address and then His Highness stepped forward and read the lengthy document in a clear voice which was heard from one end of the room to the other. The Viceroy's reply was couched in the most friendly terms and both from the tone and delivery it must be regarded as Lord Minto's masterpiece. His Excellency began by paying a tribute to Aligarh College and associated himself with the sentiments expressed by the deputation that the representation upon the legislatures as well as upon local bodies should not depend upon numerical strength of communities. Here His Excellency committed himself too greatly. H. H. the Aga Khan assured me that the deputation was pleased with the Viceroy's reply. But I am afraid it will not please the younger generation of Mahomedans"

The Aga Khan told the Correspondent that the "Promoters of the deputation had not the remotest idea of getting up an address in a spirit of racial rivalry". He said the address was merely "a petition for more extended representation of Muslim interests in the public services, legislatures and local bodies"

The Hindu as also the Congress leaders did not realise the significance of the concession made by Lord Minto to the Muslims and in an editorial on the Viceroy's reply to the deputation spoke of the "intelligent awakening on the part of some of the members of the Muslim community to an apprehension of some of the factors which keep their material position in an unsatisfactory

state. This is the first important impulse which leads to the amelioration in the condition of any community. The striving after a more elevated position in society than they now occupy is a worthy ambition, as the Viceroy said, on the part of 'the descendants of a ruling race'."

The Hindu referred to the claim in the address for representation in the services, legislatures, local bodies and the Viceroy's Council on more than a proportionate share as justified by their population and said "This is obviously an inadmissible claim and it would be impossible to give effect to it. The claim for efficient representation so as to safeguard any special interests of their own community is one which can be reasonably urged and granted. We do not indeed see why our Mahomedan brethren should be so solicitous to set up a barrier between their interests and the interests of other classes of the community".

The Hindu praised Lord Minto for the way he dealt with the Mahomedan deputation and said he had "set a wholesome example in receiving a deputation formed for avowed political objects and exchanging views with them. Lord Curzon refused to receive the resolution of the Congress from its President, Sir Henry Cotton, and justified it on the score of want of precedent in an official communique though he did not disdain to sit at dinner shortly afterwards with the members of the Chambers of Commerce and to make a speech to them on the political topics of the day. We welcome the innovation made by Lord Minto and our thanks are due to our Mahomedan brethren for being the cause of it".

The Hindu's appreciation of Lord Minto is reflected in a letter which Kasturiranga wrote to C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem in September, 1910 "It seems to me", he said, "that the reactionary forces against Indian political development are acquiring such powerful influence that it is well to mark our appreciation and gratitude of the good which Lord Minto has done although his repressive measures have also done great harm".

Lord Morley's dispatch on the Government of India's proposals for reform was published on December 17, 1908 and The Hindu described it as "a state paper of infinite importance and it would be read with rejoicing in all parts of India. It is a document worthy of a statesman bred in the best school of liberal principles and policy as is Lord Morley and is a far more memorable deliverance, by reason of its range and practical operation, than the one which it follows and amplifies, namely, the famous minute of Lord Ripon on Local self-government. We have read with unalloyed pleasure and satisfaction the sentiment of sympathy and of a sincere desire to elevate the political condition of the people of India which breathe through the many paragraphs in Lord Morley's dispatch. Apart from the intrinsic worth which we admit to be very considerable, of the scheme of reform now sanctioned by Lord Morley, we think the policy to which it gives shape is of great and enduring value. We feel no doubt that the instalment of reform which has been sanctioned is a substantial one to secure good government and the progress of the people".

The Minto-Morley Reforms, as they were called, which subsequently were implemented as the Indian Councils Act of 1909, provided for the increase in the strength of the Legislative Councils in the centre and the provinces with non-official majority in the provincial councils. Members were allowed to move resolutions and discuss the budget. Official majority was retained in the

centre. An Indian member was appointed to the Viceroy's Executive Council and on the Executive Councils of the Governors of Bombay and Madras. Provision was made for the first time for separate electorates for Muslims.

In a comment on Lord Morley's speech in Parliament explaining the reform proposals, *The Hindu* noted his letter to the Viceroy insisting that the official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council must be maintained and adding, "I must therefore regard it as essential that your Excellency's council or its legislature as well as on its executive side should continue to be so constituted as to ensure the constant and uninterrupted power to fulfil the constitutional obligation that it owes and must always owe to His Majesty's Government and to the Imperial Parliament". *The Hindu* said: "Lord Morley's view is that the Viceroy should represent the authority of H M's Government on the spot and should be responsible to the Imperial Assembly to which this country's ultimate destinies are committed and not to his council, legislature or executive. That is why he said in the House of Lords that a parliamentary system was a goal to which he did not aspire. A parliamentary system implies practically a sovereign legislature with an executive responsible to it and Lord Morley is not prepared to go so far at present in his reform proposals".

Since Lord Morley in his speech laid special importance on the nature of the reception which his reform proposals secured in India to determine the introduction of legislation connected with it, *The Hindu* sent its reporters to interview prominent leaders of political opinion and published their views. There was universal welcome and appreciation of the proposed reforms. A public meeting held in Madras under the presidentship of the Prince of Arcot thanked Lord Morley for the reforms. The main resolution was moved by Dr T. M. Nair, the future leader of the Non-Brahmin movement.

*The Hindu* published a number of letters on the proposed reforms and in a review said "So far as Indian opinion is concerned there are unmistakable tokens of appreciation and of a sense of relief from every part of the country that the proposed reforms are regarded as a timely, judicious and statesman-like solution of the impasse into which things have drifted in the country". Referring to Anglo-Indian opposition to the reforms *The Hindu* said "In taking an attitude of active hostility to the important portions of the reform proposals our Anglo-Indian brethren are, we venture to say, not acting in the best interests of the community to which they belong. By engaging in the unwholesome agitation into which they have entered they are setting up a pernicious example to their Indian fellow countrymen, nor is their action calculated to advance the cause of justice and good Government".

The euphoria created by the Reform proposals and *The Hindu's* ardent advocacy of them were not to last. *The Hindu* very soon noted that in the implementation of the reforms there were many snags which considerably curtailed the promises made by Lord Morley. It was plainly disillusioned and its comments did not reflect the jubilant tone which some earlier ones, which we have reproduced, had.

*The Hindu* was, however, pleased with the appointment of S. P. Sinha, the Bengal barrister and a Congressman, to the Viceroy's Executive Council, the first Indian ever to achieve that distinction. It welcomed the choice of Sinha with "feelings of profound satisfaction and deep gratitude" as the Legal member of the Viceroy's Council. "Viscount Morley", it wrote, "has made

good one of the most important promises held out in the royal message which was delivered to the people of India on the jubilee day of Queen Victoria's great proclamation of 1858. No statesman other than one possessing the cardinal virtues of high moral courage, inflexible love of justice and deep insight like what Lord Morley does, could have stemmed the torrent of obstruction and opposition from high and unexpected quarters which he had to encounter and have done the right amid the most adverse and discouraging circumstances." The Hindu while felicitating Sinha on his appointment drew attention to the fact that he was a Congressman of some standing.

We must give the reader some background about the obstacles and "obstruction from high quarters" which Lord Morley had to encounter in appointing an Indian to the Viceroy's Council.

Originally, according to M. N. Das in "India under Morley and Minto", the candidate chosen for the Viceroy's Executive Council was one Mookerjee but Lord Minto vetoed the choice on the ground of his complexion and plumed for Sinha. "Please do not think me terribly narrow", he wrote to Lord Morley, "But Sinha is comparatively white, while Mookerjee is as black as my hat and opposition in the official world will not be regardless of mere shades of colour".

After the British Cabinet unanimously approved the appointment of an Indian to the Viceroy's Council King Edward VII was unhappy but could not overrule his cabinet. He, however, wrote as follows to the Viceroy: "I am very unwilling to differ with you as well as the Secretary of State on the subject. At the same time I hold very strong and possibly old-fashioned views on the subject which my son who has recently been in India entirely shares. During the unrest in India at the present time and the intrigues of the natives, it would, I think, be fraught with the greatest danger for the Indian Empire if a native were to take part in the council of the Viceroy as so many subjects would be likely to be discussed in which it would not be desirable that a native should take part. However clever the native might be and however loyal you and your council might consider him to be you never could be certain that he might not prove to be a very dangerous element in your council. I have however informed the Secretary of State that owing to the great pressure that has been put upon me by my Government I unwillingly assent but wish that my protest should remain on record as I cannot bring myself to change my views on the subject".

When Justice V. Krishnaswami Aiyer was appointed to the Madras Governor's Executive Council in place of the Maharaja of Bobbili in January, 1911, The Hindu while recognising the qualities and abilities of Krishnaswami Aiyer and his fitness for the post, criticised the Governor's action in overlooking the claims of Justice Sankaran Nair who, it thought, was the person best entitled to a seat on the Executive Council. "The public", it said, "will view the supersession of his claims with great disappointment and as an unmerited injustice".

In the first elections to the new Imperial Legislative Council from Madras in January, 1910, Dr. T. M. Nair, one of the candidates, was defeated and in a long letter to The Hindu he charged the Indian non-official members of the Madras Legislative Council with breach of faith since they had not kept their promise to vote for him. Dr. Nair said what little support he got was from the Europeans and he thanked them and promised he would never forget them. He also

announced he was resigning his membership of the Madras Municipal Council as a protest against the action of the Indians.

The Hindu published a number of letters on the controversy and its own comment was to advise Dr. Nair "not to inflict a vicarious punishment on the public by resigning from the Municipal Council for what elected members of the Legislative Council did". In another letter Dr. Nair defended his decision and recalled his unsuccessful attempt to enter the Madras Legislative Council from the Madras City Council "which clearly indicates that I do not possess the confidence of the native public of this presidency" Dr. Nair added "I have had my fair share of personal compliments and adverse votes. May I humbly suggest that someone else should now be permitted to have his innings and that I should be left alone. I am most grateful to the Madras public but I shall take very good care never to come within voting distance of them"

In December, 1912, Dr. Nair was returned unopposed to the Madras Legislative Council and The Hindu columnist, Flaneur, said: "It is a tardy if wholehearted recognition of his merits and his indubitable abilities and it is very certain that he will live up to his reputation. Dr. Nair has one of the essentials of a successful politician — an independent career which gives him ample time for leisure and which does not require him to seek favour at official doors. He is no office seeker and he wants no official patronage in his profession". We shall hear more of Dr. Nair in this chronicle later on

**W**HEN KING GEORGE V ascended the throne on the death of King Edward VII in May, 1910 The Hindu republished his speech as Prince of Wales at the Guildhall, London, in which he gave his impressions of his Indian tour and also carried a double column picture of His Majesty. Welcoming him as the new Emperor of India, The Hindu said "India while it mourns the loss of an emperor whose kindness and affection secured for her the blessings of British rule — so graciously granted by the late Queen Empress — welcomes her new King Emperor whose sympathy with her people had already been assured, whose personal knowledge and insight has already led him to the true secret of wise, progressive and beneficent rule in India" The Hindu added. "Amidst the shifts and changes of parties and ministers in England and the continual changes of rulers and administrators in India, the masses of the Indian people have naturally regarded the royal family as the one permanent factor in the British connection with India and have continued to place their faith in their sense of justice, sympathy and kindness as far as they might help in promoting the welfare of the country. So far as His Majesty is concerned we may be permitted to observe that the Indian problem will be the simpler and easier one for His Majesty to grapple with. For His Majesty has had the advantage which his ministers do not possess, of a direct and personal acquaintance with it during his very recent tour and to the extent he extends his wide sympathy, there will be an ever abundant and genuine response"

Writing on the coronation of the King on June 22, 1911 The Hindu said: "The British Empire won by the sword has been kept together by the cultivation of peace. The strength of the Empire lies in the happy contentment of its subjects. The Empire must be maintained with jealous and watchful care, ministering on occasions to its growing needs and fostering the development of a true imperial spirit in the minds of its constituents. The Empire of the future must be one in which Imperial citizenship is barred to no one by reason of racial differences but all are equal under the shadow of the Imperial throne"

The Hindu presented to its readers a half tone portrait of the King and Queen Mary with the day's issue as a souvenir of the coronation

When the King and Queen arrived in Bombay on December 2, 1911, for the Coronation Durbar in Delhi, The Hindu said. "The enthusiastic and loyal messages of welcome which have gone forth to greet them from every part of

the country testify to the measure of loyalty, esteem and affection which apart from the ancient tradition of loyalty among all classes in this ancient land, His Majesty has already won for himself among the millions of his Indian subjects"

Among the distinguished invitees to the Delhi Durbar was the Editor of The Hindu and while Kasturiranga was making arrangements for the trip he learnt that there might be discrimination in the treatment accorded to Indian journalists as against European journalists. For instance while the Anglo-Indian Editors would be paid their travelling and other expenses, the Indian Editors would have to meet their expenses themselves. Kasturiranga protested against this and declined to attend the Durbar unless the position was rectified. A telegram from the Governor of Madras, Sir Thomas Carmichael, assured him there would be no discrimination between Indian and Anglo-Indian Editors and that his information was wrong. The Hindu Editor fully satisfied on this point attended the Durbar. At the Durbar the King announced the annulment of the partition of Bengal and The Hindu said "It is hardly possible to adequately give expression to the feelings of deep satisfaction and gratitude which this great and wise decision will give to the whole country and to Bengal"

The Delhi Durbar was notable for the incident created by the Gaekwar of Baroda who after offering his homage to the Emperor, turned back and walked to his seat whereas protocol required he should not show his back to the Emperor. The Hindu did not report the incident nor did it comment on it but it published a government communique on the subject. In a letter of apology to the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, the Gaekwar said that if there had been any lapse on his part in not "following the exact etiquette prescribed" it was "due entirely to nervousness and confusion in the presence of their Imperial Majesties and before that vast assembly".

To complete the story we must tell the reader what an eye-witness, Pandit Motilal Nehru, had to say about the incident. In his book "The Nehrus", B. R. Nanda quotes the following letter from Motilal Nehru to his son Jawahar, on December 22, 1911. "I was not quite unprepared for something silly on his (Gaekwar's) part. My seat at the Durbar was not far from his and we were chatting away before the arrival of the King. He asked me what I thought of the show and on my saying that it was the grandest tamasha (show) I had seen, remarked that it would have been all right if we had not to act in it like animals in a circus. He went straight to the dais, made a slight bow and at once turned his back on the King and Queen, walking away (rather sauntering away) with one hand in his pocket and turning his stick round and round with the other. Where was the necessity for all this if it was all to end in the abject apology you must have seen?"

The Hindu reports of the Coronation Durbar in December, 1911, were full and exhaustive. They were featured with double column heading and the King's speeches were carried verbatim. The Hindu editorials marking the occasion were effusions of loyalty and devotion to the person of the monarch and his Queen, an attitude which was dramatically to change within eight years. Here is a sample written on the departure of the King and Queen from India in January, 1912. "The condescension, kindness and sympathy of His Majesty has knit the hearts of his Indian people to his throne and person firmer than ever before. Unique as the event of the personal visit of the British



sovereign to his Indian territories has been, it has been rendered memorable not only by those great acts of policy which pacified and conciliated the feelings and sentiments of the people and encouraged their aspirations and ideals, but also by those personal marks of attachment and affection on the part of the King Emperor to his Indian subjects of trust and of confidence in their loyalty and goodwill'

The Hindu quoted the King's announcement about Government's plans for expansion of education and to promote the welfare of the people and said "His Majesty's visit will be remembered and cherished by the masses of his subjects far more for such words of encouragement and hope, for the many acts of Royal condescension — which demonstrated to them that they were equal subjects of His Majesty with those of other parts of the Empire with equal claim upon the attention and responsibility of himself and his Ministers — than by the great display of the Durbar at Delhi with all its pageantry and pomp of military prowess and its distinguished assemblage of Princes and Chiefs" The Hindu said: "It must be no small gratification to his Indian peoples that holding the position which he does under the British constitution of a strictly constitutional monarch, His Majesty should have found scope for evincing so much goodwill to them in a practical form for bringing about through his Viceroy and Secretary of State such a measure of practical result as has been indicated by the modification of the partition of Bengal and generally by the new spirit which is sought to be induced into the administration of British India"

A bomb was thrown on the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, in Delhi on December 23, 1912 when he and Lady Hardinge were going on an elephant in a procession from Delhi railway station. Thus was the peaceful and hopeful atmosphere created by the Royal visit shattered by one act of violence. The report in The Hindu said that the Jemadar sitting behind the Viceroy was killed and Lord Hardinge was injured on the shoulder. Lady Hardinge was unhurt. A bulletin on the Viceroy's condition said, "His Excellency was operated on at 6 p.m. today under chloroform and three small nails and dust like particles of iron were removed from the lacerated wound on the back of the right shoulder. Progress continues to be satisfactory." A graphic official account of the incident said: "The bomb appears to have burst in the rear partition of the howdah between the Viceroy and one of the attendants holding the umbrella over Their Excellencies. The full effect of the forward burst on the Viceroy was prevented by the Viceroy's seat, the back of which was wrecked but the attendant immediately behind the Viceroy was instantaneously killed. A portion of the projectile striking His Excellency's back passed upwards to his shoulder, causing a deep wound four inches long and exposing the shoulder blade. H. E. was also wounded in the right side of the neck and received four other slight wounds in the right hip. Lady Hardinge was violently thrown forward by the force of the explosives but was unhurt. Immediately after the explosion the Viceroy directed the procession to proceed but Lady Hardinge seeing H. E. was seriously wounded and losing consciousness and also that the attendant behind was dead had it stopped. It was a considerable time before the surgeon could sufficiently rally the Viceroy to allow his removal subsequently and with great difficulty, owing to the height and size of the elephant. H. E. was safely taken from it, placed in a car and conveyed to the Viceroyal Lodge".

The Hindu condemned the outrage and said. "Lord Hardinge has distinguished himself by rare acts of statesmanship and wisdom and has deserved eminently well of the people over whom he has been set to rule. The Indian public have not had a Viceroy for many a long day whose political vision as regards their future is shown to be in unison with their most cherished aspirations. There is no reason to think that the outrage upon the Viceroy was prompted by any political motives. Indian politicians of all classes can feel nothing but detestation at it. The country is in a state of general contentment and quiet. The paths of progress are being steadily laid out. There is general awakening of public spirit among the people and more intelligent interest shown in the conduct of public affairs".

This is the occasion to relate the story of an astrologer and a Governor in which Lord Hardinge was very much involved. It happened in October, 1910, when The Hindu quoted a report in a Calcutta journal which said that the Viceroy-designate, Lord Hardinge, almost missed his train at Victoria Station, London, on his way to India. The report said that the train pulled out punctually from the station and the Viceroy-designate who was saying farewell to his friends and relatives dashed forward to catch the train but was held behind by an official who waited for the train to stop. Thereafter His Excellency took his seat with dignity. The report added: "The incident would have been deplorable of course had his Lordship altogether missed the train for it would have been a bad start for the Viceroyalty".

The Hindu commented "We fear we cannot altogether agree with our contemporary in saying that the incident would have been deplorable had his Lordship missed the train altogether. If our Viceroy-designate had missed the train that day the results would probably have been a score for the correctness of astrological science; a short period of acting incumbancy for the Madras Governor, pro-tanto promotions for others and the rejoicing of all those who are thereby likely to be benefited".

The Hindu then printed a letter it had received signed by one "Venachari" and purporting to write from Government House, Ootacamund. The letter said that a famous astrologer of Rajahmundry (the name was given) had predicted that Sir Arthur Lawley, Governor of Madras, would act as Viceroy for six weeks from November 13, 1910. The Hindu said: "The incident to Lord Hardinge at the Victoria Station would seem to show that the astrologer was within an ace of having his prediction fulfilled. It may be mentioned here that our Rajahmundry correspondent informed us the other day that the astrologer in question is the person against whom a criminal charge of alleged forgery in connection with an alleged grant of land is pending and is now under remand. Judging by appearance it looks as if the astrologer's stars are not in the ascendant".

Sir Arthur Lawley was not a popular Governor and The Hindu in a series of six leading articles indicted his administration in language which was unsparing in its criticism and merciless in its exposure of his wrong deeds and misuse of power. The Hindu referred to the sedition trials and other political prosecutions and incidents and said they formed "a noteworthy record in administration. In our opinion Sir Arthur Lawley's policy has had a most blighting effect on Indian public life in this presidency. Honest but timid men have generally ceased to take part in public affairs. Disaffected and active spirits are seeking

subterranean channels to find scope for their energy. The prevailing political atmosphere has largely become uncongenial to men of genuine worth and independence of character. Hypocrites, spies, sycophants and self-seekers have an easy time of it. No man who is imbued with the national spirit can view this state of things otherwise than with feelings of deep misgivings. It is only within recent years that so called political services and political considerations have determined the conferment in some cases of offices of public trust and responsibility, high and small. Judicial appointments have been so conferred which is to the last degree subversive of principle and detrimental to the pure administration of justice. The result is that a debilitating influence has crept in which is sapping the moral stamina of men engaged in honorary public work — from the members of the Legislative Council downwards affecting all who may be in a position to devote their time and energy to public service”.

The Hindu said “In the long series of repressive acts and measures which were adopted during Sir Arthur Lawley’s administration it may be said that the local government was only carrying out the policy of repression which was avowedly pursued by the Government of India itself. No candid observer can fail to perceive, however, that the coercive measures adopted in this presidency were far in excess of the requirement. The policy of the Government of India and of the Secretary of State was one, as it was termed, of repression so far as it was needed, and of Reform in order to forward the national aspirations of the people. But it is well known that Sir Arthur Lawley did not show the same active zeal in promoting reform as in carrying out repression. It is an open secret that Sir Arthur Lawley’s Government was opposed to Lord Morley’s Reform Scheme in its cardinal points, namely, the expansion of the Legislative Councils and the appointment of Indians to be members of the Executive Councils”.

To amplify what The Hindu had said about Sir Arthur’s opposition to the reform scheme we need quote only a paragraph from M. N. Das’s book, “India under Minto and Morley”. This is what Sir Arthur Lawley said about the inclusion of an Indian on the Executive Council: “We have been in India as rulers for about a century and a half and if the testimony of competent observers is to be believed the gulf between the colours is wider and deeper than ever. We are alien rulers and ‘alien’ we shall be to the end of time”. As regards reforms he said that for a long time the British were content to govern wisely and well, to administer justice tempered with mercy giving little heed to the approbation or disapproval of the myriads whose destiny they controlled. “But nowadays among the chief tenets of our faith seems to be the doctrine that administration to be sound must be popular. That is a doctrine to which I cannot subscribe”.

Those were days when some Englishmen in the Indian Civil Service and other services sometimes behaved arrogantly and queerly and brought a bad name to themselves and to their countrymen as a whole. The history of British rule in India is replete with incidents of racial prejudice and discrimination practised by the ruling race against Indians and insulting behaviour and abuse of office. In the course of its long career The Hindu has vigorously fought against the mad and crazy acts of individual Englishmen towards their Indian fellow subjects but nothing could be more funny and more atrocious than the

"Chingleput Salaam Case", as it was called, in January, 1912 which was a product of the Sir Arthur Lawley regime

G. H. B Jackson, I C S, Joint Magistrate of Chingleput, was one day riding on his bicycle when a seven year old schoolboy greeted him with a "good morning", perhaps in a loud voice which the Magistrate thought was rude and provocative. He had the boy hauled up in his court, went through the motions of a trial and fined him Rs. 5 or in default to one week's rigorous imprisonment. When the father of the boy applied for a copy of his judgement so that he could file an appeal, the application was refused. Instead he received a letter which said. "It has occurred to me that my proceedings in C C No. 133 of 1911 being without permission of the District Magistrate, were void. It is open to me to proceed *ab initio* and to refer the case for trial to the District Magistrate; but I consider that your son has been taught a lesson and I have no desire to prolong the proceedings. The fine of Rs. 5 will be refunded"

The Hindu wrote: "It is exceedingly curious that the Magistrate was not able to find out until some days after he had delivered his judgment that there was a moral as well as a legal flaw in the action which he took against the boy. Mr. Jackson, I.C.S. is a first class Magistrate of over 10 years' standing and about six months ago acted as District and Sessions Judge. His ignorance of the elementary principles of law, justice and propriety as displayed in this case is simply amazing and incredible. Having once taken up the case and disposed of it in as irrational a manner as he had it was not open to Mr. Jackson *suo moto* to annul it, to refund the fine, and to leave the matter to stand there, even on the lofty ground that 'your son has been taught a lesson'. The person in need of a lesson now is Mr. Jackson himself — and this we hope he will receive from the High Court and the Government. We hope the Government would take due notice of the conduct of Mr. Jackson who is manifestly unfit to be left any longer in an office which requires of its holder sympathetic and tactful dealings with men and presupposes an ordinary acquaintance with law and procedure"

The matter was raised in the British Parliament and the Madras Government expressed their severe displeasure of the Magistrate's conduct.

In another case the Chingleput Superintendent of Police, E. L. Skinner, punished a head constable in St. Thomas Mount for wearing his caste mark (namam) on his forehead. In his order the Police Officer said "On December 15, 1911 at about 3 p.m., I saw the defaulter marching his men to their beat posts. He was in uniform and had a large namam on his forehead. He was only a few days back warned not to wear namam while in uniform. He thus disobeyed the orders besides appearing untidy with namam. The explanation is very insubordinate and impertinent in tone. He simply states that he has been allowed to wear namam since his enlistment (1906) and there is no order that he should not wear his caste mark when in uniform. This is absurd. The men in the force are expected to be as clean and uniform in their dress as possible. Further he was warned against this only very recently and was given extra drill. His appearance again within so short a time of his receiving the warning is nothing but a direct defiance of the orders. Reduced to fourth class for three months and transferred to Pulicat station directly after mobilisation".

The Hindu merely drew the attention of the Government to this order without comment.

And then there was the case of the I.C.S. officer who disliked an Indian wearing a hat and this also happened in the regime of Sir Arthur Lawley

The Officer, M. E. Couchman, who was Director of Agriculture, downgraded a subordinate official because he did not stop wearing a hat and change into a turban. The unfortunate man who suffered the bureaucrat's displeasure was an Indian Christian and employed in a government farm. The Director of Agriculture said the man would "look better in a turban and be less likely to discredit the farm in the eyes of visitors". Not sure of what further troubles and indignities were in store for him, the petty official resigned his job.

The Hindu wrote "Comment on the above is unnecessary. We respectfully draw the attention of the Government to the facts set out above."

The list is not over. Here is one more again in Sir Arthur Lawley's administration. The Madurai Teachers' Association had expressed concern over the poor results in the Matriculation Examination and had sent a circular to all college principals. This is the reply they received from the Principal of the Government College, Kumbakonam, an Englishman. "Sir, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular (undated) and to recommend the Madurai Teachers' Association (1) to mind its own business, (2) to put its resolution where the monkey put the nuts"

When Mark Hunter was Professor of English in the Presidency College, Madras, in 1917, one day he set as a subject for composition in the B.A. (Hons.) class the responsibility of the European races towards the dark races. One of the students, Krishna Rao, who was a Government scholarship holder and son of Mr. Amrita Row, an assistant professor in the same college, set forth his views in the composition paper which were not flattering to the European races as regards their alleged responsibility towards the so-called backward races and as to how the European races were fulfilling their "Trust" or "Mission" of civilisation in regard to them. Mark Hunter was offended by the boy's opinion and called his father for an explanation. The student was finally forced to tender an abject apology and he said the views he had expressed were derived after reading *New India*, "India a Nation" by Mrs. Besant and some of the works of R. C. Dutt. The English Professor accepted the apology and waiving the threatened expulsion of the student sentenced him to a suspension of his scholarship for a term.

The Hindu commented: "We were not aware until now that the Professor of a college or a Principal had the power to deprive a student of a scholarship awarded by the Government for brilliant results in an examination in consequence of his holding opinions which may be obnoxious to them. If they have such a power the nature of its exercise in the present case shows, in our opinion, that they are not fit to be entrusted with it. The student in question has since the occurrence of the above incident become entitled, we learn, to a University scholarship and it is a thousand pities that so promising a young man should be subjected to the soul crushing despotism of foreign teachers"

The Hindu should have remembered that perhaps this was the reason why G. Subramania Aiyer urged in a letter to The Hindu in 1906 that all Indian colleges should be wholly and exclusively manned by Indian graduates. The Hindu then disagreed with this view. "It is, we think", it said, "attempting to practise Swadeshim from the wrong end to apply the principle to educational

institutions. There is much to be said in favour of the view that a large infusion of the European element in the management of the universities and colleges is indispensable if our Indian youths are to hold their own against the youth trained in the universities of America and Europe."

Another European educationist, a missionary, clashed with *The Hindu* in 1909 on a matter which had nothing to do with education at all. Professor Moffat of the Madras Christian College started a controversy by an article in the college magazine in which he criticised the existence of a bar in the Cosmopolitan Club, Madras, and said it had led to widespread drinking habit among Indians. *The Hindu*, whose Editor was a "fairly regular visitor to the club (as he wrote to his friend, C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem) criticised Prof. Moffat and said what happened in a social club should not be discussed in public. It contended that the bar was there to provide for the needs of members who were in the habit of drinking. When Prof. Moffat replied to the editorial, the Editor in a long footnote cut short the argument saying that while he himself was an abstainer, he could not allow the question to be discussed in public and he asked Prof. Moffat who was at one time a member of the Club why he did not have the bar removed if he felt so bad about it.

By 1912 *The Hindu* had stabilised itself with a daily diet of 18 pages (of demifolio size) which not infrequently extended to 20 and 22 pages. More than half the number of pages carried advertisements and thus ensured the economic solvency of the paper. *The Hindu* had a good Indian news service and published telegrams from its own correspondents at Delhi and other state capitals and leading centres. It must have been using the newly started Associated Press of India service although there was no acknowledgement of the source in messages published. Indian telegrams were arranged under the general heading "Telegrams" (as mentioned before) under the names of the various provinces like Bombay, Bengal etc. Reuter's service to which *The Hindu* subscribed for its foreign news was scrappy and the selection was poor. Sometimes some of the messages were unintelligible and no attempt was made by the sub-editors to make them presentable and readable. We have already referred to a Reuter's obituary item which caused anguish to the *Madras Times* and *The Hindu* had to come to Reuter's rescue. What Sir Stanley Reed, former Editor of the *Times of India*, wrote in his book, "The India I knew" about the early days of Reuter's service to Indian newspapers is worth quoting. "World news was furnished by Reuter's Agency, an admirable objective service with the careful accuracy it always maintained but with cable charges of a shilling a word it was little more than 100 words a day. Reduced to this pemmican form it was not infrequently unintelligible and Reuter's representative would come round to the office with the plaintive enquiry whether we could make head or tail of some message."

Here is a typical Reuter's telegram published by *The Hindu* in 1913 in the top of column with the following headings: Telegrams Foreign Reuter's Agency The Peace Conference The success of the Conference. Times' criticism of Dr. Danelf. London, Jan. 3. "In a leading article *The Times* says the big words of Dr. Danelf will not disturb the belief of well informed persons in the success of the conference on the basis of an honourable compromise. Most friendly conversations have notoriously been proceeding daily behind the scenes of the conference."

Foreign telegrams occupied the pride of place in the leader page and were continued on the opposite page again under the general heading of "Telegrams" Local and mofussil news were fully covered by the paper's own correspondents as also legal news from the Madras High Court and mofussil courts. A session of the Madras Legislative Council at Ootacamund was covered daily by exhaustive telegrams and on one day the report of the proceedings occupied nearly two and half pages.

While there was much less of extracts from Indian and foreign press which was a striking feature in the early days, interesting stories from them and news from England from an Indian angle continued to be published. Regular features included weather report, including Madras Weather, city engagements and meetings. There was a weekly column on scientific news and views written by Dr D. S. R. Rao. There were also literary notes by a columnist and farming notes by a knowledgeable correspondent. There were sports news and English racing news was prominently featured.

In 1916 there was a rearrangement of news and features. The leader page which had been almost from the beginning on page four was now shifted further down to page eight or ten depending on the total number of pages and this deep inside leader page continued to be a feature of *The Hindu* for a long time. Over the leading article in the first column appeared a new feature "Table of contents" which also had a long innings until war-time economy in 1939 swept it away. The pages anterior to the Leader contained local stories, Letters to Editor, mofussil and Indian news and extracts. Foreign Telegrams, commercial, shipping, weather, legal and sports brought up the back pages. A weekly book review feature was introduced in 1916. This was the year also in which *The Hindu* published a 60 page annual supplement containing advertisements and articles on topical subjects and reviews.

When world war I broke out in August, 1914 *The Hindu* published daily two war specials one in the morning and another at midday for city readers and subscribers in addition to the usual evening edition. On November 1, 1915 A. Rangaswami Iyengar left *The Hindu* to take over as Editor of *The Swadeshamitran* and his place as printer and publisher of *The Hindu* was taken by Kasuriranga Iyengar.

# The War of Words with Mrs. Besant

20

**T**HE LONG STORY of The Hindu is marked by many ups and downs, of battles fought and lost, of causes espoused and won and of wars of words with officials, politicians, leaders of men and journalists. In this chapter we shall deal with the great war of words which The Hindu carried on for over 25 years with Dr. Annie Besant, Theosophist, leader of the Home Rule movement and determined opponent of Gandhiji. The Hindu attacked Mrs. Besant as a Theosophist, vehemently supported her as a fighter for Home Rule to India and vigorously denounced her when she led the party of opposition to Gandhiji. It was a bitter saga of attacks and counter-attacks, thrusts and counter-thrusts with no holds barred by either party and incidentally involving people and issues having no bearing on the principles for which they fought. It is difficult to say who won if at all anybody did but all was forgotten when the noble lady passed away in the thirties and her one time foe paid her a fitting and rich tribute for her great services to this country in the cause of freedom and her spiritual uplift.

Our story begins in 1894 when Mrs. Besant spoke in Madras and the southern cities on the glories of Hinduism and Hindu civilisation. We have already noted that G. Subramania Aiyer, then Editor of The Hindu, who was an admirer of the Western civilisation, questioned her thesis and asked her if India had produced a lady as great as Mrs. Besant herself. In one of its many leading articles on Mrs. Besant's lectures, in 1894, The Hindu said that in spite of the fact that she did not know Sanskrit Mrs. Besant was able to make a thorough study of the Hindu scriptures and Upanishads. The next day it was told by Col. Olcott of the time Mrs. Besant "has given to the study of Indian philosophy." The Hindu wrote: "He (Col. Olcott) says that so far from being ignorant of Sanskrit Mrs. Besant carries with her in all her travels the Bhagavat Gita and Sankara's Commentary on the Upanishads in the original Sanskrit and reads them attentively whenever she finds a spare moment. Invariably she reads them daily in the train and with the same absorbing interest that her average compatriot gives to the latest novel or sporting paper. She uses no dictionary in the railway carriage but refers to one or other English translation when she encounters some word whose meaning she cannot instinctively grasp at the first reading. Col. Olcott has been present on frequent occasions when she has consulted some English knowing Hindu Sanskritist and found that almost



invariably she had already a very definite idea of the meaning of the word or sentence under discussion, her difficulty being as to the best of the synonyms that might be employed to render it clearest. Nobody is more surprised than Mrs Besant herself to see how on opening a fresh page in one of the ancient books a sense of its familiarity rushed into her mind as though vanished memories were coming back to her. In fact one does not hesitate to say that the picture of her last birth before this has been brought vividly before her mind and that she positively knows that she was then a Brahmin Pandit of what is now called the North-West Province. In this birth, she has, Col. Olcott says, on her own statement to him, been studying both Hindu and Buddhist philosophies during the past 14 — not four — years, while as leader of the materialistic party she used to quote the best ethical maxims they contained to offset the pretended superior moral code of Christianity; hence her familiarity with the ancient Aryan literature is not the miraculous growth of the past four years as we with the general Indian public had supposed."

This background to Mrs Besant's teachings provided by *The Hindu* itself is necessary to understand the controversy which was sparked off on January 24, 1911 by a letter from the well-known physician and popular leader of Myslapore, Dr M C Nanjunda Rao, which *The Hindu* prominently published. In his letter Dr Nanjunda Rao questioned the theories and practices of Mrs Besant and her introduction of J Krishnamurthi as a world teacher. He especially pounced on the theory of the Mahatmas propagated by Mrs Besant and asked if the existence of the Mahatmas was true why was it then that none of the saints of south India, the Alwars and Nainmars had mentioned them and why was it that the Mahatmas were not present to guide the Theosophists at their conventions. Dr. Nanjunda Rao, it may be mentioned here, was the personal physician to Col Olcott, associate of Mrs Besant. Dr. Nanjunda Rao also questioned the authorship of the book, "At the feet of my master", ascribed to J. Krishnamurthi, a young boy, and said it was fantastic to believe that an untutored boy could have written such a book. Dr. Nanjunda Rao said if Mrs. Besant's claim to clairvoyant powers was true then she should place them "at the service of the authorities for the discovery of bombs, secret societies of anarchists, murderers and other criminals and thus save the Government immense troubles, expense and anxiety".

In a comment on the letter *The Hindu* said: "It is we consider a gratifying sign of the times that responsible members of the community are realising the need for a critical examination of the Theosophical movement and of its varied manifestations and branches of activity. We may say that we are prepared to publish any communication which may be sent to us on the other side in refutation of the facts and reasoning advanced by Dr. Nanjunda Rao".

*The Hindu* in the course of the next few days published a number of letters on the controversy and followed them with another editorial in which it expressed its surprise that "some of the foremost among our educated men should be found within the fold of Theosophy". It added, "If in the present century there are in southern India people credulous enough to believe in effusions of this sort may heaven help them!"

The great debate on the Mahatmas of Theosophy went on in *The Hindu* for weeks and months with tens of letters for and against the teachings of Theosophy. Mrs. Besant herself kept silent and according to one report

stopped a letter which had been written in reply to the controversy in *The Hindu* as she did not want to take notice of what appeared in *The Hindu*

The debate continued in March, 1911 and a chief feature was the series of articles contributed by P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar on the aims and practice of Theosophy, including the controversy about the existence of the Mahatmas. *The Hindu* also published the text of a pamphlet issued by Sitaraman, son of Ramaswami Aiyer, who was one of the recipients of letters from the Mahatmas and who sought to prove they were forgeries and written by Madame Blavatsky herself.

At the height of the controversy Mrs Besant delivered a lecture at V. P. Hall, Madras, to explain her stand and *The Hindu's* comment was: "The impression of several persons who were present on the occasion and who are competent to give an opinion on the subject was that Mrs. Besant's discourse, highly rhetorical as it was, was singularly inconclusive and unconvincing as regards the main points at issue and this opinion would, we venture to think, be confirmed by all those who read her speech. The public must have been aware that so astute a speaker as Mrs Besant could quote "scriptures" for her purpose. The point however which Mrs Besant had to prove was not that sages like Narada, Sankaracharya, Buddha, Christ and Mahomed who were highly spiritualised beings once existed, but that the Theosophist Mahatmas, Koot Hoomi, Morya and the rest of them are a reality and are not a phantom of the imagination. Mrs. Besant herself had declared in one of her former writings that if human evidence can ever substantiate a fact, the fact of the appearance of the Masters and of the communications received from them during the years is placed beyond the possibility of doubt. This shows that at the time she wrote these lines she believed she had overwhelming "human evidence" in support of her assertion. And the first piece of evidence which she then cited and relied upon was the experience of Mr. S. Ramaswamy Iyer, District Registrar. We need scarcely point out that after the myth of Ramaswamy Iyer's communications with the Mahatma K. H. has been exploded by the publication by his son of the fictitious letters on the subject, reproduced in these columns, Mrs Besant has thought better of it and has avoided mention of his name. No evidence of any sort was however referred to by either the President (Mrs Besant) or the Vice-President, Sir S. Subramania Aiyer, at the meeting and if the public were prepared to take their mere words as authority and themselves as infallible guides the meeting of yesterday afternoon need not have been held. There is no need for extraneous evidence to prove to the outside world that the Mahatmas are a figment of the Theosophic imagination, whose fictitious existence, opinion and counsel are sought to be availed of for very mundane purposes". *The Hindu* concluded: "It is for our readers to judge whether under the circumstances which have been disclosed the Theosophical movement has deserved well of the people. We cannot say honestly it has".

Mrs. Besant's lecture provoked more letters to the Editor including one from Dr. Nanjunda Rao who exposed one or two instances quoted by her for belief in the existence of the Mahatma as without evidence, and another from the novelist, K. S. Venkataramani who while ridiculing her appeal to the Government to prosecute *The Hindu* said: "After all, I can't help regretting that this noble woman should waste her splendid talents in a wild goose chase under

the potent spell of, we hope, a sincere delusion. Theosophy never affords her the congenial atmosphere for the vitreous scintillations of her bursting rhetoric without at the same time weakening the sane and lucid exposition of a complex conception of fact which leaves no room for polished pedantry. Her emotional eloquence has not the redeeming quality of a powerful appeal to the head. She herself is a tyro in the subtle sciences. So her eloquence is the only merit. And that is too sandy a foundation upon which to base the working power of a society which has pretensions for a spiritual complexion".

Writing on July 10, 1912, *The Hindu* said that the Theosophical Society has become a hotbed of internal dissensions and angry discussions and "reason is resuming its sway in the minds of its members in the place of blind faith and child-like credulity". The paper indicated that trouble was brewing for Mrs. Besant over J Krishnamurthi. *The Hindu* said: "Only fools or mad men could believe in this 20th century that the boy Krishnamurthi is an incarnation of the divinity. Mrs. Annie Besant and Leadbeater have made up a story of the sacred mission of the boy and the justification for the legend lay in the existence of people who were willing to believe in it. We have abundant evidence to show that the boy is very much a human being and no more and no less. His father who is a retired Government official and was once a devout Theosophist has now become completely disillusioned, has seen the error of his action in handing over his son (Aleyone) to the care of Mrs. Annie Besant and is now making frantic endeavours to get his son back to his home. We have every reason to believe that if the son is not peacefully restored soon to his parents by Mrs. Besant the law courts will form the theatre where an interesting page of theosophical history will be unfolded to the public".

The controversy involving J Krishnamurthi was further intensified when Dr. Nanjunda Rao wrote a letter to *The Hindu* enclosing copies of two letters written by Krishnamurthi from London to his brother in Madras to prove that his knowledge of English was not well enough for him to have written the book "At the feet of my master". His theory was that the book must have been written by an older and expert man and the authorship was claimed for Krishnamurthi to justify the story about the avatar of Christ etc. *The Hindu* agreed with this view and there were a number of letters mostly supporting Dr. Nanjunda Rao.

On October 23, 1912, a reception was accorded to Mrs. Besant at the V. P. Hall, Madras, by a committee of citizens which included Justice Sadasiva Aiyer and G. A. Natesan. *The Hindu* while announcing the meeting in its city engagements column warned the sponsors that the court had already been moved with regard to the custody of Krishnamurthi and his brother with Mrs. Besant and only the fact that Mrs. Besant was out of station had prevented the fixing of the date for hearing the suit.

On October 25 *The Hindu* announced that J. Narayanaiah, a Government pensioner and father of the minors, J. Krishnamurthi and J. V. Nityananda, had filed a suit the previous day against Mrs. Besant in the court of the District Judge of Chingleput.

In her written statement filed in the suit against her, Mrs. Besant made a number of charges against *The Hindu* and referring to them the papers said they were unfounded and untrue. "The allegations that in or about October 1911, the plaintiff was subjected to "persecution" and "pressure" was put upon him

by The Hindu to remove the plaintiff's son from defendant's care is a false one. The plaintiff and the Editor of The Hindu and others connected with it were entire strangers to each other and no oral or written communication had passed between them before October, 1912, that is, till after the plaint in the suit against Mrs. Besant in the form in which it has been filed in the court had been prepared by his legal adviser."

In April, 1913, the Madras High Court decided against Mrs. Besant in the suit, brought against her for custody of his two sons by J. Narayanaiah. The Court ordered the two minors to be treated as court wards and to be restored to Narayanaiah. The Hindu welcomed the decision but expressed surprise that the judge should have ordered the plaintiff to bear his costs and that of the defendant. It urged the Government to order an enquiry into the whole matter as revealed in the case and also to order Leadbeater to leave the country.

The Chief Justice and another judge dismissed a petition by Mrs. Besant for staying the order for the removal of the minors from her custody. The Hindu reporting this said, "Mrs. Besant is a formidable antagonist with resources, intellectual and otherwise of a multifarious kind and the belief was widely entertained that the plaintiff was in the position of a person playing a very unequal game in the field of litigation with her and that even after the judgment pronounced by Mr. Justice Bakewell, the fruits of his decree were as far from him as ever. In the closing words of her eloquent address in her own defence in Mr. Justice Bakewell's court, Mrs. Besant said 'If I am declared unfit to be in charge of these two boys I should not be deemed fit to be a spiritual teacher of so many thousands of men and women, I should bow with submission to your Lordship's decision and shall never think of disobeying the decision but I shall treat it with the greatest respect. I leave the case in your Lordship's hands, in the hands of him who in the High Court represents the justice of God and the King and into Your Lordship's hands I place the character, the good name and honour of my boys'".

The Hindu said: "Mrs. Besant has evidently felt that these words did not stand in the way of her applying to stay the execution of Mr. Bakewell's decree at the earliest opportunity or of adopting the truculent attitude which she has shown in her arguments today in support of the motion. Whatever may be the result of the appeal it is a matter for sincere acknowledgement that their Lordships by their orders passed today have in the meantime vindicated the claims of justice and have enabled the father to realise the fruits of his decree as much as could be done by the process of law."

The Hindu published full proceedings of the case and later carried numerous letters on it. At least one reader, who said he was a longstanding member of the Theosophical Society, announced his resignation from that body in protest against Mrs. Besant's action. Mrs. Besant went in appeal to the Privy Council and won her case there. Meanwhile J. Krishnamurthi who became a major elected to stay with Mrs. Besant.

In May, 1913, three defamation cases were instituted by Mrs. Besant against Dr. T. M. Nair, Dr. U. Rama Rao and The Hindu in connection with the publication of an article in Dr. Nair's journal, "Antiseptic", by Dr. Nair on unnatural practices by Leadbeater and their condonation by Mrs. Besant. Dr. Rama Rao was accused of distributing copies of the article in the form of a pamphlet and The Hindu with extracting it in its columns.



G Subramania Aiyer, Editor and one of the six founders of The Hindu. Pictures of three others are on the right. Photographs of P. V. Rangachariar and D. Kesava Rao Pant, the other two founders, are not available.



M. Veeraraghavachariar



N. Subba Rao Pantulu



T. T. Rangachariar

1884

Dear Sir

I am sorry I have not been able to write to you since I left Madurai, and I hope you will be kind enough to excuse that mistake.

I have say you have not allowed the subject of the National Press to drop out of your mind. It is more than six months since the press was purchased; and it is not at all probable that we have not been able to pay more than half its cost. Payment must be made without delay. I have therefore requested you that you will be good enough to forward your friends to remit their promised amount without delay. I speak to Mr. Sallanayagam Pillai who is, I am very glad, is warm in the matter as well as a gentleman.

Your means of position should be. Should you feel any difficulty in collecting the amount of paper among the writers in a temporary, I think you might send your individual subscriptions separately. I know I give you much trouble; but I have the satisfaction that I give it for the benefit of the paper as well as my country.

I have to compliment the paper on the excellent English he writes in writing a newspaper which, however, he must avoid general statements, making of the commonplace truths as much as possible.

Yours truly

G. Subramania Aiyer

Facsimile of a letter written by G. Subramania Aiyer to a subscriber in Madurai on August 8, 1884. In it the Editor of The Hindu requests him to collect donations promised to pay towards the cost of the National Press purchased by The Hindu.

Mine

NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB,  
WHITEHALL PLACE SW

London 20<sup>th</sup> February 1896

Dear Vansittart Chair

I am send you my first  
representation to the Com mission -  
which will have more  
as I have said to you before, one Indian  
left up to our necks in the matter with their  
ideas - But you will have to take great  
care, that neither my name nor of the  
Commission is in any way connected  
in connection with them. You will have  
noticed for many authorities in your  
own able way or if the Editor -

Can do nothing more from others - especially  
I have sought who should support my  
representations, and take up my the subject  
in relation to the little wing them upon some

part of representation. You will see at  
the end of my letter what I have done  
for David - that is to say the question are  
188  
connected with representation.

If the Com mission approve of the Indian  
as a competent and known person, then will  
not be difficulty about expenses  
Besides you have some balance in hand  
from the your Congress of 1894, which could  
well apply to the person - or if that could  
not be done, you can easily raise a sum  
for the person - But as I have said if the  
Commission accept him - the expenses will be  
with the person.

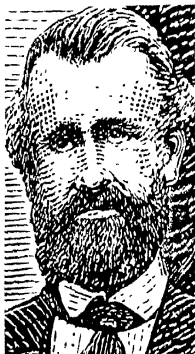
Yours truly  
Rudolf Steiner

Mr. Vansittart Chair &  
Handwritten of  
Chairman

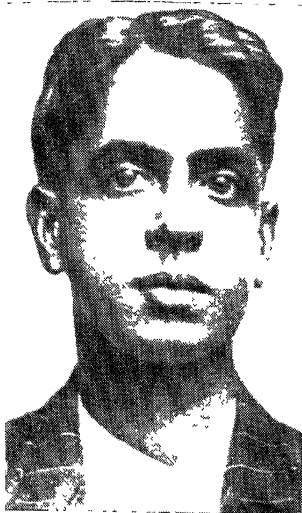
Facsimile of a letter  
written by Dadabhai  
Naoroji to M. Vee a  
raghavach from  
London on February  
20, 1896. I was his  
letter which enabled  
G. S. Ania Aiyer  
to go to London to  
tend to evidence before  
the Welby Commission  
which was enquiring  
into Indian expendi-  
ture and of which  
Dadabhai was a  
member.



The first Sub-Editors of The Hindu. (L to R) C Karunakara Menon, K Natarajan and K. Subba Rao Two famous columnists (Left) Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao and (Right) Eardley Norton (Below) (L to R) P. Kesava Pillai, noted correspondent and contributor William Digby, believed to be the anonymous London Correspondent of The Hindu and R Ganesh Aiyer, the first known Chief Reporter,







S Rangaswami, Editor,  
1923-1926

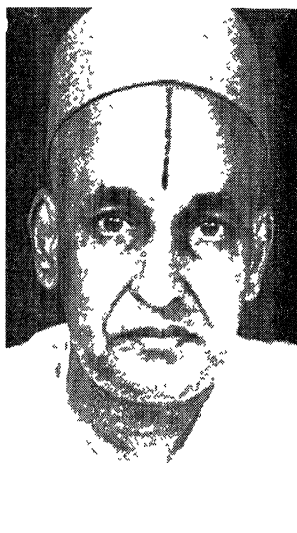


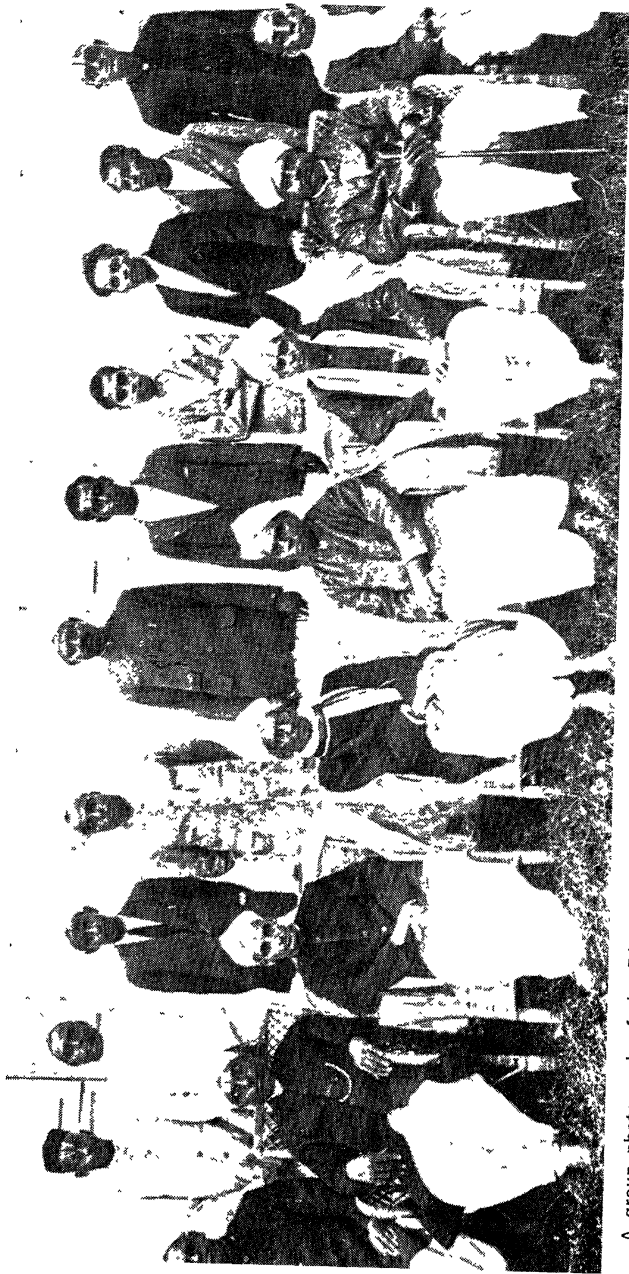
A Rangaswami Iyengar,  
Editor, 1928-1934.

Kasturi Srinivasan, eldest  
son of Kasturiranga Iyengar,  
Editor, 1934-1959.



K. Gopalan, second son of  
Kasturiranga Iyengar, Joint  
Proprietor and Publisher of  
The Hindu





A group photograph of the Editorial staff of The Hindu with the proprietors, Kasturi Srinivasan (third from right) and K. Gopalan (third from left) taken during the celebration of the Golden Jubilee in October, 1928.



Assistant Editors of The Hindu  
V S Ramaswami Sastri



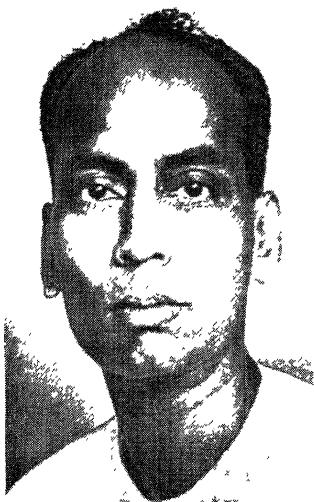
K. P. Viswanatha Aiyer

N. Raghunatha Aiyer

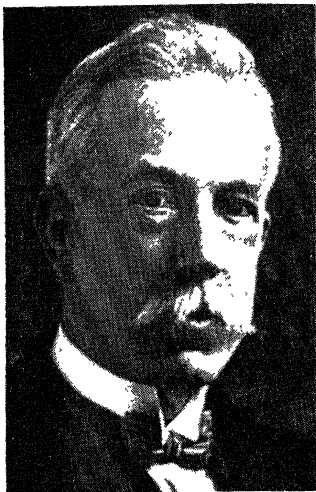


R. R. Bashyam Iyengar  
(Chief Sub-Editor)



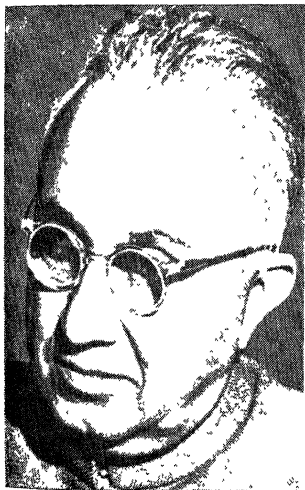


S. Parthasarathy, Editor  
1959-1965.



Frederick Grubb, London Correspondent of The Hindu from 1911 to 1933.

B. Shiva Rao, The Hindu's Representative in New Delhi from 1935 to 1947



"S.V.V." (S.V. Vijayaraghavachariar) whose short stories and skits in The Hindu were a popular feature in the 1930's



The Senior Presidency Magistrate who heard the cases dismissed them, holding that Mrs Besant had supported the unnatural practices of Leadbeater which formed the defamatory part of the article. The Hindu said that in the course of the case instead of being the complainant Mrs. Besant had to assume the position of having to defend herself against the charge of supporting Leadbeater in his practices. The Hindu added "Her (Mrs Besant) belated excursion into the field of litigation has now cost her dear in reputation and pocket and we shall wait to see what her next move will be"

When Mrs Besant started the Young Men's Indian Association (Y.M.I.A) in Madras in January, 1914, with the help of influential persons as she claimed, The Hindu wrote: "The objects of the Association are undoubtedly worthy of the attention of all who are interested in the well-being of the rising generation of Indians and under ordinary circumstances we should be the last to disapprove of and discourage the acceptance of the services of so capable a public worker like Mrs. Besant and her reported offer of financial assistance. It seems to us, however, that the present is a peculiarly inappropriate time for allowing her to start any large movement on behalf of the public and to accept her guidance and support. The manner in which she has lately figured in the civil and criminal courts in Madras, the heated controversy in which she has embroiled herself with the Christian Missionaries of Madras and what is far more important than all, the proceedings now actually pending in the High Court against her for committal of contempt—ought to make responsible members of the community, Indian and European, feel very reluctant in the matter of associating with her for any common and ostensibly good purpose. It seems to us, with all deference to the gentlemen concerned, that there is the want of a sense of propriety in judges of the High Court and others holding high official and unofficial positions giving countenance to Mrs. Besant's public activities in the present stage of her litigation".

Sir C. Sankaran Nair, who according to Mrs Besant, was Chairman of the Managing Committee of the Y.M.I.A, wrote to The Hindu the next day that he had consented to be a member on certain conditions and since those conditions had not been fulfilled, he did not consider himself a member of the Association

Thus ended the first phase in the acrimonious dialogue between The Hindu and Mrs. Besant and two years later in 1916 when The Hindu referred to Mrs. Besant in its leading article it was as her ardent admirer and champion of her cause as against the Government. What had happened in the interval to contribute to this remarkable transformation of a bitter enemy into the best friend? The Hindu did not reveal nor did any reader of the paper ask. But the discerning observer could see that Mrs Besant's Home Rule movement which she started shortly after the war broke out brought her popularity and fame which made her the most important nationalist leader in the country. And The Hindu could not swim against the current. Mrs Besant's paper, *New India*, was as popular if not more, as *The Hindu* and in some parts of the Madras Presidency it was even ahead of its rival. The Hindu believed the Home rule demanded by Mrs. Besant was only a reiteration of what the Congress had already demanded and there was nothing special or original about it and it did not give as much publicity to it as it did to the Congress affairs before and to the non co-operation movement later. But The Hindu started admiring

Mrs. Besant for her tenacity, for her courage and determination in the face of persecution and calumny from the rulers and her own countrymen and for her steadfast devotion and struggle to achieve freedom for India

And when a security of Rs 2,000 was demanded under the Indian Press Act, 1910, from *New India* in May, 1916 by the Madras Government The Hindu strongly protested against the action "The public will have no difficulty" it said, "in coming to the conclusion that this arbitrary step has been taken to undermine the influence of Mrs. Annie Besant, an Englishwoman of striking personality and generous instincts, who has done splendid service in the cause of India and who has recently given a powerful stimulus to the movement for self-government for India. The zeal and earnestness with which she is advocating the cause of Indian political development on the platform and in her paper, the *New India*, have rightly earned for her the gratitude of the people of this country, whose resentment and grief therefore at this official action will be keen and poignant".

The Hindu published a number of letters criticising the Government's action and it commented on the action of a railway bookstall, run by a European firm, in refusing to sell copies of *New India* and also that of the Principal of the Forest College, Coimbatore, who refused to invite a representative of *New India* to cover a college function. The Hindu also exposed the ugly provisions of the Indian Press Act, 1910 which had put fetters on expression of public opinion. The paper took to task the Bombay Government for banning the entry of Mrs Besant into Bombay Presidency.

The Madras Government forfeited the security deposited by *New India* on August 30, 1916 and demanded fresh security which Mrs Besant paid. The Hindu welcomed Mrs. Besant's action since "its (*New India*) entire disappearance would be a grave loss to the journalistic world and to Indian public life and we should welcome the continuance of its career for the public good with scrupulous regard for official susceptibilities and for the provisions of the Indian Press Act which its gifted Editor is capable of understanding and acting upto as much as anybody else".

As the Home Rule movement gained in intensity and there was growing nationalist upsurge among the people in Madras presidency, the Government under Lord Pentland, Governor, began a repressive policy and created greater opposition and bitterness for itself. Lord Pentland in an address to the Legislative Council in May, 1917, said that all talk of self-government was beyond the "range of practical politics". The Hindu's comment was: "It betrays an unpardonable ignorance of the deep-seated, eager and honest desire of Indians to be in their country what other people who have responsibility and power are in their country".

In June of the same year, The Hindu referred to rumours of impending repressive policy in Madras and action against Mrs. Besant and said: "It would be an injury of a grave kind not only to Mrs. Besant personally but to the people of the country for whom she has been rendering invaluable services. By her indomitable energy, unceasing devotion to the public cause and the employment of her great talents in the promotion of India's uplift, Mrs. Besant has placed the people of this country under a lasting obligation to her. Any action on the part of the Government to put Mrs. Besant out of the field of public activity would be a grave blunder and would be resented by the public as an

attempt to stunt the growth of the people of this country to the political stature which is their due”

On June 16, 1917 The Hindu reported that Mrs. Besant had met the Governor who told her that the Government intended to put a stop to her activities. His Excellency did not have any proposals to make but asked Mrs. Besant if she had any. Mrs. Besant said she had none, she had nothing to withdraw or explain.

The Hindu added that orders were served on Mrs. Besant, G. S. Arundale and B. P. Wadia under the Defence of India Rules internment in one of the places specified in the order (it happened to be Ootacamund, a hill station). The Hindu said “The D. O. I. Act is primarily a war measure and with all due respect to the inscrutable wisdom of our paternal government the logic of whose action like “the peace of God” “passeth all understanding”, we have failed to be convinced that the internment of these three persons will serve to bring the present unhappy war to a victorious conclusion or induce Germany forthwith to acknowledge defeat”

In a moving letter of thanks to the Editor, Kasturiranga Iyengar, Mrs. Besant said “Dear Mr. Kasturiranga, May I say a word of thanks for your very kind words about me yesterday. I am expecting an order which will silence me, so this will be my last word”.

The Hindu had some questions to ask the Government for the reason for its repressive policy which culminated in the internment of Mrs. Besant and her associates. “May we ask what has happened in India or in Madras in particular which has rendered the inauguration of repressive measures as a matter of urgency? There has not been a whisper of rebellion or any widespread conspiracy in this part of India at any rate, and yet the D. O. I. Act intended against aliens and enemies in Great Britain has been put in force against three brilliant, unselfish and devoted workers for Indian constitutional reforms. Our sorrow is all the greater because this step has been taken at this time when India is contributing her best towards the victorious termination of the war, when new hopes are entertained in the land and when the necessity for conciliating public opinion must be obvious to sound statesmanship. The internment of Mrs. Besant and her co-workers is a particularly unfortunate decision which will be widely interpreted as a hostile act directed against a movement which has met with much popular support and which she has directed so zealously and which is sure to suffer as soon as her guiding hand is forcibly removed. But she believes in her robust optimism in the ultimate triumph of her cause”

In another editorial The Hindu described the internment of Mrs. Besant “as a violent and unconstitutional act of aggression upon Indian constitutional agitation as typified in Mrs. Besant”. The paper whipped up a campaign against the Government’s action. It featured in big headlines the report of a public protest meeting in Madras (which it described in the heading as a “Monster meeting”) and published the texts of the speeches delivered on the occasion by eminent leaders. (Strange as it may seem now one of the signatories to the requisition for the meeting was Dr. M. C. Nanjunda Rao, Mrs. Besant’s persecutor of earlier days). In subsequent issues the paper published reports of protest meetings all over India and also long letters from readers.

The Hindu criticised the official replies in the House of Commons to questions on Mrs Besant's internment and particularly referred to Mr Austen Chamberlain's (Secretary of State for India) statement that he was not consulted about the internment but approved the action of the Madras Government. The Hindu made it plain that the people of India as a whole now supported the Home Rule movement of Mrs Besant.

The Hindu expressed concern in August, 1917 over the health of Mrs Besant interned at Ootacamund and said it had confirmation of her poor health from Theosophists in Adyar one of whom, Jinarajadasa, it quoted and asked the Government to "consider the consequences of their action both in its public as well as personal aspects. What is it that has prompted the educated Indians throughout the country, the Mahomedan leaders as well as the Hindus, to lift up their united voice against the internments? The Government must now be in possession of the opinions in full detail entertained in England regarding their arbitrary and high-handed action. They may now put themselves the question as to what imperative necessity there was for curtailing the liberties of so great a personality as Mrs Besant, what need there is now for continuing in a blunder which has caused a feeling of profound estrangement and indignation among a vast mass of thinking men and women in this country, whose goodwill towards the Government is of paramount importance at this hour when the British Empire has to conserve all its available resources."

The Hindu said "The people of India have not deserved at the hands of Government any dose of coercive or repressive measures at the present time. They have been engaged in peaceful, lawful and constitutional agitation. No disorders have followed in any part of the country. Liberty of speech, the right to hold public meetings and the freedom to write on public questions within the limits of law are the only means by which Indian political agitation has hitherto been carried on. Any act on the part of the Government to restrain the exercise of these rights is a direct blow at the liberties of the people and must be resented as such. If the minds of the people are turned towards the adoption of a form of passive resistance for carrying on political work, it is when the Government turns a deaf ear and presents an obdurate attitude towards all other methods of constitutional agitation leaving the people in a state bordering upon despair as regards their legitimate aspirations and demands".

Devadoss, a columnist in The Hindu who wrote often on current topics, had this to say about the Home Rule movement on April 3, 1916 "Have you ever watched a tug of war between two well matched teams? At first it is an even prolonged pull, then comes the stage of pull devil, pull baker, each side obtaining a slight advantage and then follows — a long and strong pull on both sides — a giving away slowly on the weaker side and then a give away altogether with a run. In that way will Home Rule come to India" What a prophetic remark!

On August 20, 1917, Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, made a declaration in Parliament on British policy in India. It was a historic declaration and it was as follows. "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive



realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible and that it is of the highest importance as a preliminary to considering what these steps should be that there should be a free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at home and in India." Montagu added that in pursuance of this policy he would shortly visit India to hold consultations with the Government of India and other official agencies.

The Hindu characterised the declaration as "an insipid, uninspiring and disappointing declaration which will cause keen dissatisfaction throughout the country. The Congress and the Muslim league last December demanded and the Indian public have since been asking for a definite announcement by His Majesty's Government that it was the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date and that a definite step should be taken by granting the reforms contained in the scheme accepted by these bodies. The frigid and cautious statement of Mr. Montagu if it is a reply to that united demand, must be pronounced to be a highly unsatisfactory declaration which cannot be expected to allay public discontent much less to excite any enthusiasm among the people of India. The language employed is extremely vague. Everybody knows that British statesmen have been proclaiming for over a century and half that it is the policy of the Government to associate Indians more and more with the administration in every branch of it and the further statement that it is their desire to develop gradually self-governing institutions in the country "with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government as an integral part of the British Empire" does not take the problem very far. This is so especially as we are told that this goal could only be reached in successive stages as those entrusted with new responsibilities show themselves fit for the task and as the experiments prove to be successful, the authority to decide whether the scheme at each stage is a success or not being the Government of India and the Imperial Government. To be frank, this long awaited pronouncement smacks very much of gubernatorial utterances with which the Indian public have become only too familiar during the last few months and it will fall flat on the country."

A direct result of the Montagu announcement was the decision to release Mrs. Besant and her co-workers which was announced in the Imperial Legislative Council on September 5, 1917. "The decision will form without doubt", said *The Hindu*, "the harbinger of peace and goodwill and it will pave the way for a peaceful platform on which the important constitutional questions now at issue between the people and the Government may be discussed. In order however to maintain a stable equilibrium in the relation between the Government and the people it is necessary that the local officials in many parts of the country and the more truculent portion of the Anglo-Indian Press should refrain from their mischievous activities. It is these two classes that foment disunion among the different sections of the Indian community, stimulating their worst passions and playing upon their weak points"

When Mrs. Besant was released on September 17, 1917, *The Hindu* welcomed her and her co-workers back to the ranks of active public workers. "We have no doubt", it said, "Madras will give Mrs. Besant an ovation and public demonstration of rejoicing of such a description as cannot be restrained by the petulant interference of little men dressed in brief authority" *The Hindu*

said the fact that Mrs Besant had been released unconditionally showed that the Madras Mail (which had been saying that she would not be released unless she forswore her past actions) had been playing "either a big game of bluff and bluster while really profoundly ignorant of what has been going on in the official world or is a consummate hypocrite" The Hindu said "The attitude of this Anglo-Indian paper in this matter has been one of naked and unashamed journalistic depravity"

Mrs Besant was given a great reception on her return to Madras on September 21 and referring to it The Hindu said "Mrs Besant returned to Madras this morning exactly three months after she departed from it in consequence of the order of internment Her arrival at Central Station with her co-workers, Messrs. Arundale and Wadia, was the occasion for a most unprecedented demonstration of popular confidence, love and respect The railway station and its premises were packed with people of all creeds and classes The ovation given at the station and the magnificent procession which was formed from it to Adyar, nearly five miles in length, was of a character to baffle description All along the route which was thronged with immense crowds the people vied with each other to do her honour with heaps of garlands, burning of incense and chanting of Vedic hymns It was a spontaneous and whole-hearted welcome given to the venerable lady who has given of her best to the Indian national cause by the leaders as well as the masses of the people The magnificent reception was one which kings might well envy and it shows the political consciousness of the people and their deep sense of gratitude which is bred of national service rendered to them"

One consequence of the internment of Mrs Besant and the growing popularity of the Home Rule movement was the anti-reform and anti-Besant campaign launched by the Madras Mail which thought that the release of Mrs Besant unconditionally would affect the prestige and authority of the local government and wanted the European community and conservative Indian opinion to rally round it to force the Secretary of State to change the mind of the Government of India. The Madras Mail sent a cable to the Secretary of State to this effect and followed it with a threat to launch a passive resistance campaign if its efforts to halt reforms were not to succeed. In its campaign it secured the support of the leader of the Non-Brahmin movement, Thyagaraya Chetti, who sent a cable to the Secretary of State supporting the Madras Mail's standpoint and opposing Home Rule His cable created a great furore among Non-Brahmins in Madras and The Hindu printed numerous letters protesting against it and Non-Brahmins also held public meetings for the same purpose

The Hindu wrote a leader almost every other day joining issue with the Madras Mail, ridiculing its postures and suggesting its crazy articles were fit material for action under the Press Act T Earle Welby was the Editor of the Madras Mail at this time and the war of words between him and The Hindu was a prolonged affair and brought out their powerful style and the capacity to hit and to be hit in turn An anti-climax to this journalistic warfare was that when Earle Welby returned to England in the twenties he became the Literary Correspondent of The Hindu in London and his weekly contributions on books and reviews were a notable feature of the Literary Supplement which The Hindu published every Wednesday

A public meeting was held in Madras early in November, 1917 to protest against the "persistent and mischievous campaign carried on by the reactionary section of the Anglo-Indian Press and the European and Anglo-Indian community in India and England misrepresenting the attitude and intentions of the Secretary of State and the Government in releasing Mrs Besant and desiring a calm atmosphere in India during the forthcoming mission of Montagu to discuss the proposals for Indian political reform. The meeting urged the local and imperial Governments to take "effective action to maintain the authority, the prestige and respect due to the Secretary of State and the Viceroy from such unjust calumny".

Sir S. Subramania Aiyer, who was one of the important speakers, said "They are trying to hinder the work of Mr. Montagu. They are trying to make his visit useless. They want to make him an unwelcome guest in India. I do not know what he is going to do for us here or on his return to London. Our many experiences in the past naturally make us cautious if not pessimistic, for more than once the very food held to our mouths has been withdrawn and we were left hungry and gaping. But I will say this of Montagu. By his speeches and by his behaviour in the past he has proved that he is in earnest and means business. He wants to do what is fair and just for India. He is not obsessed by the false sense of superiority of the white man over the Indians. He has insight and understanding of the Indian problems and by his visit he will see for himself the new life which is pulsating the country. It is very necessary therefore that we must make his path smooth and his work easy. The European clique wants to play the part of the obstructionist; ours is the duty to make supreme effort to help the Viceroy and Mr. Montagu and enable them to see the true position".

The Hindu-Madras Mail dialogue reached new heights of vituperation and slander when the Madras Mail on November 13, 1917 accused The Hindu of profiting by the advertisements of European businessmen while calling them "glorified grocers" for their political agitation. The Madras Mail wrote "Continuing its efforts to raise the level of political controversy in India, The Hindu now describes the European movement as that of the 'glorified grocers'. The Hindu's sacerdotal hands doubtless accept advertisements from glorified grocers of British nationality and we suppose from time to time is reluctantly compelled to receive payment for them from the grocers. But doubtless the rites of lustration are performed after every such dishonouring experience unless indeed the employment of a panchama as receiver obviates one kind of pollution at the risk of another".

The Hindu in its reply said "May we point out that the European business community in India is not here for any altruistic reasons or from any large hearted principles of imperial development. Its main inspiration is an 'enlightened self-interest' and that likewise determines their conduct of business in this country. We have never believed in mixing up politics with business and while always anxious to encourage indigenous industries and the displacement as far as possible of European commercial agencies by Indian, have never demanded the heads of the former on a charger and we can consequently affirm that our relations with such of them as chose to take advantage of this journal as a medium of advertisement have been of a cordial character. Their money is not any more tainted because their opinions on the

future ordering of this country happen to differ from ours, at least to our mind, than their advertisements happen to be the less effective because made in a journal on the opposite side of politics to themselves. We shall certainly not model our political opinions to suit the views of our advertisers”.

When Montagu arrived in Madras on December 14, 1917 for talks with the local Government and popular representatives, *The Hindu* was pained to note the restriction imposed and the efforts made to prevent easy access to the Secretary of State for India. It said “Mr Montagu it is believed, has been so segregated and access to him is so carefully regulated that it is impossible for him to move with all classes of persons and derive first-hand knowledge of conditions in India. The seclusion of Mr Montagu and the interference of the bureaucracy in the matter of selection of deputations and of persons for interview and in demanding alterations in the address have created an amount of dissatisfaction and irritation that could well have been avoided. It is a matter of astonishment that a Secretary of State who goes out to India to ascertain the wishes of the people as to their future government should be told to hold his tongue as it were and quietly return to England with cartloads of printed addresses, memoranda and representations. A full, free and frank discussion with the leaders of the people on the various aspects of the momentous problem cannot, we fear, be had in the strictly limited sphere allowed him in India. It is a humiliating position for Indians to be denied free access to Mr Montagu and the ban on the Secretary of State in regard to social engagements is a proceeding of which the authors need scarcely congratulate themselves”.

How much in fact the people expected of him as *The Hindu* said was noted by Montagu in his diary. “Poor things”, he wrote, “the people of India expect a great deal. Some are apprehensive and hope that their apprehensions will not be realised, but most of them, in fact, everybody that shakes hands with me, believe that a new heaven is going to dawn upon earth and I do not see that anything we can do will be satisfactory to them. Madras has produced no contribution whatever to the discussion of matters we have to deal with. The Government of India letters and circulars are answered on half sheets of notepaper, the whirlwind rages round them, political storms wax and menace and they remain obstructive, angry, sullen, effortless”.

This was Montagu’s impression of Earle Welby. “Frankly he (Mr Welby) admitted that Mrs Besant incident had made him determined to resist all reform, that his was a daily newspaper; he did not think much what he wrote, that if he had been editing a weekly he might have watered down some of his language” Mrs. Besant told Montagu “that she did not much care what scheme we adopted provided that it led automatically to complete Home Rule within a short time. I urged her to use her influence with the Congress to put that test to any scheme that was submitted. She said she would but they would take anything which gave them elected majorities and the power of the purse. She then said that there must also be some restriction of coercive legislation, that she never knew when and how security would be demanded for a paper and for what reasons”. Montagu wrote “My own view is very strongly that if the Government would only explain themselves, see these people more often not merely warn them, but argue with them as we have been doing in our interviews, they could do a great deal of good. It is the unexplained *hukum* that

is out of date" Montagu's comment on the Government of Madras whose policies The Hindu had been criticising was that it was "an impossible institution"

"Here if anywhere", he wrote, "officials administrate and do not govern, here if anywhere they refuse to explain themselves and hold themselves aloof, here if anywhere they misuse powers either through their Press Act or their powers to disallow resolutions and bills. Pentland does not know what is going on in his own province. How can he know? He never discusses politics with these people. Pentland thin, whiskered, in a tightly buttoned frock coat, large gardenia like flower in his buttonhole, saw us off on the platform, looking what he is — an early Victorian Governor in postwar India"

Mrs. Besant was elected President of the Congress at its Calcutta session in December 1917 and The Hindu mentioned she was the fifth European to have that coveted honour, the others being George Yule in 1888, Sir William Wedderburn in 1889 and again in 1910, Mr Alfred Webb in 1894 and Sir Henry Cotton in 1904. "The chain of causes that has brought about this consummation", The Hindu said, "is easily discernible and the result is the natural outcome of the deep gratitude which the people of this land feel towards one who in the short space of less than three years has raised aloft the banner of Home Rule for India. But Mrs. Besant's greatest claim for such mark of recognition as lies within the reach of a powerless people is, as we have said, the splendid educative work she has accomplished. Her indomitable energy, her remarkable powers of organisation, her absolute freedom from fear of consequences, her marvellous eloquence and her passionate love for the land of her adoption have been ungrudgingly and unsparingly placed at the disposal of the country. A woman of vast resources, of varied knowledge, and of infinite capacity for taking pains, she had without any thought for her comfort or convenience thrown herself into the vortex of agitation and directed the movement of which she was the head with consummate skill, ability and perspicacity. When her motives were misunderstood and her activities discouraged and in consequence she paid the penalty for intrepidity and boldness, by losing her freedom, the whole country from one end to the other sprang up in defence of her and carried on an agitation which ultimately resulted in her release. This remarkable rally evidenced as much the people's confidence in Mrs. Besant as the poignant feeling that in attacking her the bureaucracy really attacked the national movement of which she was a prominent leader".

The third phase in the relationship between Mrs. Besant and The Hindu began in 1919 when the Government of India adopted a policy of repression in the Punjab after the war and promulgated the Rowlatt Act (named after the British judge who recommended the drastic measure) whose draconian provisions were intended, the Government said, to put down terrorist activities but was opposed tooth and nail by Indian nationalist opinion as directed against the peaceful patriotic people of India. Mrs. Besant supported the Act and also the measures taken by the Government to suppress what she called violent activities of a few. A famous remark of Mrs. Besant in defence of the Rowlatt Act was: "When the mob begins to pelt them (soldiers) with brickbats, it is more merciful to order the soldiers to fire a few volleys of buckshot". The Hindu which carried on a raging campaign against the bill even while it was being discussed in the Imperial Legislative Council said: "That the

Government is wholly irresponsible to Indian popular opinion has been often demonstrated but never more so than in the present case"

The Hindu received abundant support from Bepin Chandra Pal, the fiery orator of Bengal who was in Madras and his speeches at public meetings were extensively reported and enthusiastically received. Speaking at a monster meeting at the Triplicane beach, B. C. Pal said that by passing the Rowlatt bills which were intended to put down revolutionaries, the authorities were in fact helping them. "Repression is not the way to suppress the revolutionary movement", he said. "The revolutionary wants repression. He wants executive mishandling of every situation. He wants that all the leaders should be sent to prison. He welcomes all these lawless laws. He welcomes whatever would goad the sensitive youth of the country to political madness. He wants it and the Government is exactly doing the same. They are playing into the hands of the revolutionary."

Mrs. Besant in her paper *New India* in February, 1919 objected to the Editor of *The Hindu* presiding over the meeting addressed by B. C. Pal and also complained against *The Hindu's* remarks on her comment on the "deterioration of public life in Madras" and connected them with Bepin Pal's "slanders" against her. She wrote "It is the policy of *The Hindu* to insert all insults except against its own favourites and the matter has come to a head with Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal."

*The Hindu* replied "Regarding the accusation that the policy of *The Hindu* is to insert all insults except those against its own favourites and that it is sedulously fostering divisions ruinous to the country, we wish to say nothing more than that we are content to stand by the cool judgment of the Indian public in preference to the emanations from the heated brain of Mrs. Besant. It is interesting to note that as her defenders among Indian nationalists are daily diminishing she is finding appreciation in unlooked for and formerly hostile quarters. We may add in conclusion that we do not wish to continue the personal controversy between Mrs. Besant and *The Hindu* any further excepting when it may be necessary to correct any misstatement of fact. By taking this course we are conscious that we shall be causing disappointment to some of our correspondents whose letters lie before us as well as to those who may find a stock of amusement from such a controversy conducted with animation on both sides."

When the Rowlatt bill was passed into law on March 19, 1919 *The Hindu* wrote, "It is an iniquitous piece of legislation symptomatic of the system of Government under which we live and its authors will yet have to reckon with the volume of popular indignation which has been aroused." *The Hindu* welcomed the resignation in protest against the bill of B. N. Sarma from the Imperial Legislative Council and hoped "there will be other self-respecting members who would follow his excellent example".

*The Hindu* again got into trouble with Mrs. Besant in April, 1919 over a comment by it on an interview which the Associated Press of India had with her relating to the Rowlatt Act. Subsequently *The Hindu* published a revised version of the interview put out by API and in an editorial note apologised to Mrs. Besant for misquoting her. Later, *New India* published an account of the interview which seemed to confirm the original version and *The Hindu* commented that after all there was no need for any apology by it and it was based

on incorrect premises. The matter did not end there. On April 24, 1919, The Hindu reproduced an extract from *New India* which was claimed to be the correct version of Mrs Besant's interview to API. This was what, Mrs Besant said, she told API about the Rowlatt Act "The Rowlatt Act is so largely changed that it ought not to come into force except against the revolutionary movement. There is nothing in it therefore which a good citizen can resist. It was under these circumstances it was proposed by Mr Gandhi that the agitation against it should include the breaking of other laws".

The Hindu's comment on this was, "We find it a little difficult to disentangle this complicated skein of "mights", "oughts" and "dids". Those of our readers given to the pastime of solving acrostics may find some little intellectual exercise in it and when they have done it without involving a nervous breakdown they would probably be still left wondering. However the matter is too trivial seriously to argue over and we only return to it because we do not wish to be accused of misrepresenting Mrs Besant by omitting to quote her latest communiqué on the subject".

Mrs Besant was involved in another controversy in April, 1920 over what were alleged to be her anti-Congress activities in England. The Hindu on April 21 devoted a full page and more to highlight Mrs Besant's letter to the Secretaries of the All-India Congress Committee protesting against the attack on her work in England by V. J. Patel and G. S. Khaparde and Tilak's reply in their defence. Breaking all tradition The Hindu featured the story in double column with four headings which said "A campaign of calumny Mrs Besant's attack. Mr Tilak's crushing reply. Congress deputation and Mrs. Besant".

The charge against Mrs Besant by V. J. Patel and G. S. Khaparde in the interview which was published by the Bombay Chronicle was that Mrs Besant's activities in England caused embarrassment to the Congress deputation which was there in connection with the Indian Reform Bill which was before Parliament. They also said that Mrs. Besant did not effectually plead for women's suffrage in India. Mrs. Besant in her letter quoted two letters which appeared in the Bombay Chronicle subsequent to the publication of the interview which defended her. One of the letters said that the assertion that Mrs. Besant did not fight for the inclusion of women's suffrage in the reform bill was ridiculous. Mrs. Besant always and everywhere had been loyal to women and she had always claimed for them equal status, rights and privileges and opportunities with men. Mrs. Besant wrote, "I ask the AICC as men of honour to dissociate themselves publicly from the pronouncement of these two members so that they may not share in the disgrace of their methods. The public life of India is soiled by such slanders and all who care for the cleanliness and decency of that public life should condemn those who use them".

In a spirited reply to Mrs. Besant's letter to the AICC, Tilak said: "I have no hesitation in saying that Mrs. Besant has entirely misrepresented the matter to you when she says that the case rests only on her word against Mr. Patel's and that the latter's statement is entirely false. Mrs Besant may be in touch and talking under the inspiration of the Mahatmas but for all that I join my testimony to that of Messrs. Patel and Khaparde in asserting that her attitude is

this matter was against the Congress deputation. Her ambition to boss the whole show and to claim for herself the entire credit for work in England was in my opinion the main object of all her activities in England and under such psychological conditions one can easily believe she must have asked the Labour Party to accept her view in preference to that of the Congress deputation in regard to the revised bill".

The Hindu's comment on the controversy was "We suspect her (Mrs Besant's) object was not so much to clear herself as to throw some mud, mud not of the common or garden variety but sanctified mud such as Mrs Besant and *New India* honour opponents with on occasions upon a man who is departing on a political mission of importance in order to discredit him in advance".

We must now refer to an issue associated with The Hindu's general campaign against Mrs Besant and the Theosophical Society particularly which caused many to wonder at the time whether The Hindu was not interfering in purely a private matter which raised no question of public interest. On March 5, 1920, The Hindu under the heading 'Adyar ways' wrote about an "astonishing piece of news", namely, a proposal for the marriage of G. S. Arundale, a European with a Brahmin girl, who The Hindu claimed was a minor. "We have had our own suspicions regarding the atmosphere and surroundings of Adyar", The Hindu said. It strongly opposed the marriage to "a person, who has been claimed as a spiritual adept, with the active encouragement of Mrs Besant under whose care and so called spiritual guardianship are many Hindu families" and said "it is a matter of the utmost concern to the community as a whole". The Hindu warned Mrs Besant and Arundale "that their responsibilities will be terrible and that the reaction of such a step on their political and educational activities will be intense. The duty of Theosophist Indian leaders of the standing of Dr. Subramania Aiyer, Mr. Justice Sadasiva Aiyer and others in this grave matter is also obvious. They should avert the consummation of what would prove to be a great scandal and should uphold their own claims to the confidence and respect of their fellow countrymen. We may have to revert to this painful subject in our next issue if in the meanwhile the necessity for doing so has not ceased to exist".

On March 6, The Hindu referred to what it called "a scurrilous letter" from one A. S. Ramulu which said, "The only parties who are entitled to object would be her relations and I absolutely fail to see the propriety of The Hindu in attacking a private transaction. This shows to what despicable lengths political hatred might lead The Hindu which has completely lost its head in writing about this transaction. The Hindu has done a grave injustice to the girl and made her the subject of common talk everywhere".

The Hindu replied: "In fairness to ourselves it has to be stated that the matter of yesterday's editorial note was wholly derived from a close relative of the girl, a gentleman of education and position at whose desire the article was published in the interests of the family of the girl as well as the general public".

The following day The Hindu reverted to the same subject in its main leading article under the same heading. It revealed that the close relative of the girl who was responsible for the previous editorial, was T. M. Krishnaswami Aiyer, maternal uncle of the girl. It referred to letters from two brothers of the



girl which it carried in the same issue and said while one of them had said that he as the eldest brother and his mother had consented to the marriage (the father of the girl was dead), the other brother had said that the mother had given her consent under coercion. The Hindu also referred to a letter by T. M. Krishnaswamy Aiyer who had given in great detail particulars of what happened. The Hindu wrote "We are bound to say that our intervention has been appreciated not only by many of the relations of the girl but by a large section of public opinion which is entitled to respect. In our opinion the contemplated marriage is open to several objections of which the disparity in age between the parties is the least important. The strongest objection is the relative position in which the one stood to the other and the advantage taken of the same in order to bring about a union which is very unusual in the community to which the girl, the weaker party, belongs and which was vigorously opposed by several of the relations and well-wishers of the family. Mrs. Besant and Mr. Arundale stand in the position of spiritual preceptors to the girl and other members of the family. The fact that neither Mrs. Besant nor Mr. Arundale thought fit even to acquaint the girl's relatives of the proposed marriage is very significant in itself. There is then the question whether a marriage between persons belonging to different races is advisable. We think that it is not advisable except in special circumstances. We should not indeed go so far as to interdict marriages between Indians and Europeans but seeing that such marriages more often than not end unhappily, as experience has shown, it seems to us, that those who enter into it ought to be persons who are fully capable of forming a mature judgment and of realising the consequence of their action". The Hindu also said "Except by a process of circumventing the law and legal procedure, no regular form of marriage can take place as the law stands in this country between an Englishman like Mr. Arundale and a minor Hindu girl. If such a marriage does take place there would seem to be good ground for holding it to be irregular in law as it would be inadvisable socially".

George Joseph, noted Congressman and lawyer of Madurai, in a spirited letter to the Editor took him to task for his stand on the Arundale marriage proposal. "Will you permit me to raise a note of protest against your editorial concerning Mr. Arundale's engagement? I do not understand the point of your objection. Why on earth should not Mr. Arundale or anybody else in the world have the liberty of offering honourable marriage to a young Brahmin lady? For the life of me I cannot realise the thing that is worrying you. Is it because Mr. Arundale is an Englishman and the young lady is a Brahmin? Indians have married Englishmen and I know as a fact many such marriages have been successful. Or is it that Mr. Arundale is 40 and the young lady is 16? There is disparity in age no doubt but South Indian society which tolerates marriages between old widowers of 60 and children of 12 need not venture to throw a stone. But if it is political capital you are trying to make out of it, I respectfully suggest you are hitting below the belt".

The controversy assumed wider dimensions when the Madras Mail joined the fray and New India in a vituperative article accused The Hindu and its Editor of wickedness of all kinds. The Hindu in an editorial on March 12 held that the Madras Mail's statement that the "young lady is no longer a minor" was entirely untrue and added. "She is 16 years and a few days old and

unless she has completed 18 years she cannot be said to have passed the period of minority"

The Hindu wrote "We have had occasion to refer to the esoteric and other kinds of activity of the Theosophical Society in Adyar Anglo-Indian journals may view some of the outward manifestations of them with an amused kind of tolerance but to those who attach importance and value to men of robust national fibre, instances of the depths of human credulity and of self-abasement revealed by them must appear most distressing The Madras Mail is scarcely justified in disposing in an airy manner our point as to the legal validity of the marriage We fail to see the "anti-climax" which our contemporary has discovered in it It is true that The Hindu was not dogmatic about it but its clearly expressed opinion supported by grounds was that if the proposed marriage did take place it would be invalid in law as it would be inadvisable socially"

The Hindu reproduced in its columns two letters, one by the girl's uncle and the other by one of her brothers written to the Editor of New India refuting the allegations in the paper in regard to The Hindu editorial The controversy gave rise to more letters to the Editor, supporting and opposing his stand But the whole matter suddenly came to an end with the publication in The Hindu on April 29 of an API message from Bombay which reported the marriage of Mr G S. Arundale to Miss Rukmani Nilakanta Sastri before the Registrar of Civil Marriages in Bombay on April 27

But The Hindu-Besant enmity persisted and their exchanges were more bitter and numerous and the man responsible for them was Gandhiji, who was a national hero and saviour in the eyes of The Hindu and a betrayer of India's interests to Mrs Besant On March 5, 1921 The Hindu asked: "Does anybody take New India seriously nowadays? This inconvenient auxiliary of the Liberals in its insensate hatred of Mr. Gandhi and all his works, reinforced by an equally strenuous desire to strafe opponents nearer home, has cast to the winds all the principles that it once stood for and, to be just, in some measure suffered for. It is a melancholy sight and we only draw attention to it because we wish to make it clear to those of whose consciences our contemporary is the custodian, what exactly they are letting themselves in for. Honest differences of opinion one can always tolerate, but the campaign conducted by New India has long ago transcended the limits not only of honesty but of ordinary decency. It has persistently taunted Mr. Gandhi with insincerity in his professions of non-violence Such insinuations the public can afford to treat with the contempt they deserve. What it cannot afford to treat with equal indifference is our contemporary acting as a kind of jackal to the bureaucracy, playing up official vagaries and by perpetual hints and suggestions of the wickedness of Mr Gandhi and his followers, egging them on to the 'firm measures' which we are now witnessing".

A few days later The Hindu had again to refer to New India: "Apparently New India and its Editor are lost to all sense of decency in their hysterical outbursts. The following however surpasses all limits of tolerance: 'A constant war has been kept up against New India by agents of The Hindu all over the mofussil who have worried and threatened its subscribers and as a consequence of this and of our unceasing war against non-co-operation we have lost two-thirds of our subscribers' ". The Hindu said "In so far as it refers to activities inspired

or directed from this office the statement, we need hardly say, is a frigid calculated lie. Such outbursts against individuals and newspapers which happen to incur the august displeasure of Mrs Besant have become too common a feature in New India to be treated with anything but the contempt they deserve."

New India came out in defence of V. S. Srinivasa Sastri who was attacked by *The Hindu* in April, 1922. *New India* wrote "Some petty scribbler in a Madras office whom nobody knows and whose vulgarity of expression shows his incompetence, who may never have been outside his own country and who may not even have discussed Indian affairs with the rulers of India, under the safe veil of anonymity pours out his venom and his hatred on a fellow countryman whose main fault is that he has justified India's fitness to rule herself in the eyes of the rulers of the nations. The thing is obviously absurd and grossly incompetent, but it is a disgrace to the Indian Press. A man can only be judged by his peers if he is to be fairly judged and in this case his peers have judged."

*The Hindu* commented. "Conscious as we are of our unworthiness to criticise so exalted a person as the Rt. Hon. Sastri to whose already supermundane stature, *New India's* catalogue of his virtues ought to add a few redundant inches, the exigencies of journalism demand that we occasionally attempt the task. It does, so strangely the world is ordered, sometimes fall to the lot of a 'petty scribbler' to criticise the sayings and doings of supermen. He may be inadequately qualified for the task but it has to be done and his shortcomings are after all there for the readers of the journal and its contemporaries to detect and expose. That must be our only excuse and we offer it for what it is worth. It is rather late in the day to sit at the feet of *New India* and gather enlightenment but we appreciate occasional good advice as now. We make a mental note of the fact that it is an impertinence for us to "attack" Rt. Hon. Mr Sastri and we hope the latter will in the plenitude of charity, temper his just indignation with mercy. After all he has a jealous watchdog — if we may be permitted to apply a canine analogy to quarters which can proudly say, "I am not the Rose, but I have lived near it" — in *New India* which may be trusted to do its duty even to the point, as in the present case, of spluttering incoherence."

In an attack on Mrs. Besant *The Hindu* wrote on November 12, 1921. "Public opinion did not see eye to eye with her in all her wild extravagances or admire in its entirety her raging, tearing propaganda, but she acquired the crown of martyrdom by the stupidity of the Pentland Government and her subsequent career has shown that Mrs. Besant's earliest and most constant love has been not India but Mrs. Besant and when the public fell away from that allegiance she turned and rent it with a magnificent disregard of past professions. It is not a picture on which one cares to linger — this cynical exhibition of the clay feet of a once popular idol and we do not suppose the public are as much interested in the views and antics of Mrs. Besant as she no doubt thinks they might be".

On January 31, 1929, *New India* ceased to be a daily and became a weekly. In a tribute to its great adversary *The Hindu* said: "The disappearance of a familiar paper which had seen a second birth not long ago (*New India* was originally called *Madras Standard* and took its name after it was purchased by Mrs. Besant) in order to enable Dr. Besant to conduct her propagandism on behalf of Home Rule for India, will be regretted by all those who were

accustomed to look to its pages for vigorous one-pointed and sustained efforts by the distinguished Editor who had made the cause of Indian Swaraj her own"

Mrs Besant, although her antagonism to Gandhiji and his non-violent Satyagraha movement remained, drew the attention of the British rulers to the "dangerous" situation developing in India. In an interview to *The Hindu* correspondent in Delhi on February 26, 1930 she said "The position in India is growing dangerous because people are getting too hungry to remain quiet any more. Delay is dangerous. I hope England will realise it. I know these words may be alarming but alarming words when accurate are less dangerous. Indian youths are becoming alive to India's position. Their enthusiasm for freedom is so great that they break up meetings of people like Sir Chimanlal Setalwad. They meant no insult to the Bombay leader but they are enthusiastic for India's liberation".

Referring to Mrs Besant's criticism of the Salt Satyagraha movement as one "heading to anarchy", *The Hindu* said "Dr Besant has evidently been unable to get rid of her ingrained antipathy to Gandhiji and his ideals sufficiently to judge the movement, its causes, and consequences without bias and without passion. Dr Besant fulminates against the mass mentality, 'which marches triumphantly along, denouncing and persecuting all who resist its sway'. This soreness bred by the memory of ancient affronts altogether gives her away. For none but she has so far accused Gandhiji or his followers in the present struggle of 'persecuting' or even wishing to annoy those who do not see eye to eye with them or refusing (as Dr. Besant implies) to submit to the penalty imposed by the law without complaint. That a born rebel like Dr Besant — the associate of Dr Bradlaugh, the ardent suffragette, the champion of Theosophy, the crusader of Indian Home Rule — should now turn round and object to a passive resistance movement of this kind can only be regarded as one of the tragic ironies that time brings in its wake".

On her 85th birthday on October 1, 1931 *The Hindu* published a two-column picture of Mrs Besant and wished her many happy returns.

Two years later on September 20, 1933 the great fighter and friend of India was dead. As she was slowly nearing her end *The Hindu* published daily reports of her health and the last one by Jinarajadasa said she was serene and peaceful and awaiting her end. *The Hindu* which carried a three-column memoir on her wrote: "Dr Besant's peaceful end was strangely unlike the manner of her life; it was as gradual, as inevitable and as serene as her impetuous and strenuous career was full of shocks, surprises and transitions, she who cut her way through life as with a sword, passed out of it as gently as the lamp does when the oil is emptied and the wick is dry. The conventional language of sorrow is out of place in recording such an event. Few have lived a fuller life or longed more for release. Ripeness is all and it was given to her in overflowing measure. There was in Annie Besant something akin to great natural forces — something elemental, daemonic — fructifying. Her terrific energy was the source of her power. Simple as her mental make-up essentially was and vigour rather than profundity marked her range of thought, she gave to every cause she espoused its utmost momentum, to every idea its amplest expression. With all her genius for organisation and her severe practicality in handling affairs, she had something of that desire for quick and

concrete results which often go with egocentric natures. The means rarely interested her except for the end it subserved. In this she was truly a child of the West. In nothing was this outstanding trait better illustrated than in her great work for India. Whatever may be the ultimate verdict of time on particular activities into which she threw herself with all the élan with which nature had endowed her in amplest measure, it may be safely said that she more than any other single individual helped India to rediscover her soul just as Gandhiji more than any other single person has infused that soul with a new vitality. The Victorian age saw India content to play the role of camp follower to the conquering West and oblivious alike to the value and the possibilities of her ancient heritage of power and wisdom. Dr. Besant was one of the noble band who awoke her from this trance and implanted in her people the desire for a new, full and free life. And when they come into their own they will not surely forget the trumpet voice that awakened them to a sense of national self-respect. The Home Rule movement which she organised gave Indian nationalism a purpose and a momentum which soon carried it far beyond where she was left stranded. And she could not reconcile herself to being so left. But it is not her faults — who has them not? — we should remember today. We should remember and be grateful for that gallant chivalry, that undaunted courage, that passion for liberty and that sympathy with the under-dog which made Annie Besant so formidable a fighter of oppression, so valiant a champion of the weak and downtrodden.”

# When Emden Shelled Madras

21

**W**E HAVE TRAVELLED far with Mrs. Besant covering many years and we must now retrace our steps to 1914 which was the year when the world saw the outbreak of a great war and India's own participation in it. The Hindu fully supported the allies and it indicted Germany for starting it on August 3, 1914. "With that headstrong impetuosity", it wrote, "which since the present Kaiser took the reins of power from the hands of Bismark has always characterised the actions of Germany, she has absolutely forced war on Europe. Alone among the powers of Europe she appeared to be not only ready but eager for war. Her curt ultimatum to Russia and to France could have but one answer but she was too hasty to wait for even that answer to afford her a plausible pretext for going to war. In that impetuosity she has violated every canon of international relations". The Hindu said "If Britain is forced into war we earnestly hope that the Empire will stand together in her support. The messages of loyalty and offers of help from the Dominions are couched in the true spirit of patriotism and it is to be hoped that we in India will not be behindhand in either".

When Britain declared war on Germany at the expiry of her ultimatum, The Hindu wrote: "There is only one feeling uppermost in the minds of all Indians, namely, what shall we do to discharge our duty at this juncture as citizens of the Empire and how shall we co-operate with other parts of the Empire to secure speedy success to British arms".

The Hindu featured the British declaration of war on Germany as a double column story on the Leader page with thick type headings. As the war progressed it gave prominence to war news which received double column treatment and was spread over two pages. There was a weekly review of the war situation in the editorial columns and these proved to be most educative and popular among its readers. S. Rangaswami, nephew of Kasturiranga Iyengar and a young law graduate who joined his uncle as an Assistant Editor in 1910, and later became Editor after his uncle's death, wrote these war reviews. His analysis of the war strategy used by both sides, his clever anticipation of their next moves and his extraordinary knowledge and grip on facts made him an outstanding writer on the war which was recognised by the Government and resulted in an invitation being extended to the Editor to visit the war fronts in Europe four years later. Throughout August and September the pages of

The Hindu were filled with war stories, both telegrams and detailed reports from overseas Press by mail, and there was little space for Indian news other than from a war angle.

The popular feeling with regard to the war was expressed by Subramania Bharati who in a letter to The Hindu from Pondicherry on September 3, 1914 quoted with approval a statement made by Balgangadar Tilak on the war and said: "He (Tilak) has given all our thoughts, ideas and aspirations in a nutshell. We want Home Rule, we advocate no violence. We shall always adopt peaceful and legal methods to achieve our object. In peacetime we shall be unpromising critics of England's mistakes. But when trouble comes, we shall unhesitatingly stand by her and if necessary defend her against her enemies. And to those who may thoughtlessly persecute us in England's name we shall say: Oh! Ye of little wisdom. It may be in your power to temporarily injure us in petty ways. But you can never crush us. For we are lovers of humanity and servants of God; the children of righteousness and the peace that shall endure for ever".

Madras had the first taste of the war very early. The Emden, German pocket battleship, shelled the city on September 22, 1914 and the result was panic among the people many of whom began leaving the city. There were many rumours afloat that the Emden was coming back and the Commissioner of Police announced a reward for information regarding an Indian or European who spread the rumour and created a scare.

The Hindu in an editorial note published a letter from a resident of Chindatripet (a city area) who said: "Will you be good enough to ascertain from the authorities concerned how far the very strong rumour that the Emden is going to bombard Madras tomorrow night is true? As a consequence of this unfounded but yet strong rumour the majority of the residents of Georgetown and all other divisions of the city are moving to the mofussil and the rest that are in the city are what we should call panic struck". The correspondent wanted the Editor to give publicity to the true situation and the truth or otherwise of the rumours circulating in the city.

The Hindu said: "We may assure our correspondent that the rumour referred to has no foundation and there is no reason for apprehension of any sort. We hope however that the Madras Government would show by some active measures that it realises the state of panic which the people have fallen into and take adequate steps to reassure them of their complete safety. The bombardment by the Emden has violently shaken the placid conditions of Madras and it is scarcely sufficient for the Government to rest in the quiet confidence of its strength and security. It must take the people fully into its confidence and devise prompt and suitable measures to restore the mental equilibrium of the common people".

The Hindu the next day in a reassuring report told the public that "information received from very reliable and authentic sources places the number of deaths as a result of shelling by the Emden at three and 13 persons are reported to have received injuries of a more or less serious nature". It added that reports of 20 and 30 deaths and of an equal number of injured in the hospital "are of an extremely exaggerated nature".

A correspondent reporting the big exodus from Madras in the three days following the Emden's exploit said the railway station staff found it difficult to cope with the traffic. "It is said that at some stations not far away from Madras

the prices of articles have gone up enormously Besides the traffic by trains, large numbers of people are going by road in carts and on foot It is estimated that the exodus from Madras during the last three days must be between 60 and 70,000 people".

The Hindu heaved a sigh of relief on September 30 on learning that the Emden was far away from Madras and operating in the neighbourhood of the Laccadive Islands. "The people of Madras would utter a sigh of relief that the Emden's activities have now advanced to the West Coast of India far enough from Madras for it to fear any near visitation. There are indeed reasons for thinking that the Emden did not consider either Madras or Pondicherry worthy of any powder and shot and therein apparently lay the safety of Madras".

The Hindu said that the Emden "has till now proved too illusive, too daring and too resourceful for the naval strength and skill of the Imperial Government in Indian waters. We can only hope that she has exhausted her strength by her varied exploits which have caused not a little damage to Indian trade and British prestige and that she will now vend her way to the coast in German East Africa, fearing that any further stay in the Indian Ocean must inevitably end in disaster to her"

Gandhiji made his first visit to Madras on April 17, 1915 and he was accompanied by Kasturba Gandhi They were given a reception at Central Railway station, the "heartiness" of which, The Hindu report said, "had been such as had been equalled in few instances before". The report added: "Long before the arrival of the Delhi Express the station platform and the compound had been filled in its strictest sense with people who had come to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi A little disappointment was however in store for the people When the train arrived they searched all the first and second class compartments but in vain and they were inclined to think that Mr. Gandhi had not come But a guard told them that Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi had come by that train and that they were in a compartment at the end of the train. A long search discovered Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi sitting in a third class compartment. Mr Gandhi looked thin and emaciated, a loose shirt, soiled by four days of continuous travel, covered his body and a pair of trousers similar in appearance covered his legs. There was a rush to that compartment and the crowd was such that about a dozen policemen who had been there found themselves powerless to manage the crowd and had to leave it to shift as best it could. With the greatest of difficulty a way was made for Mr. L. A. Govindaraghava Aiyer to pass through the crowd to the compartment and he garlanded Mr Gandhi and shouts of "Long live our hero", "long live Mr and Mrs. Gandhi" and "Bandemataram" rang from the crowd. Mr Gandhi bowed to them in acknowledgement and was conducted to the carriage that had been kept for them. The students who had gathered in large numbers unyoked the horse and volunteered to drag the carriage. The carriage, dragged by the students, was taken to the premises of Messrs G. A. Natesan and Co. at Sunkurama Chetty Street, Mr Gandhi being cheered all along the way. Mr. and Mrs Gandhi standing in the carriage acknowledged the greetings. On arrival at Messrs. Natesan & Co., where he will be stopping during his stay in Madras, Mr. Gandhi stood up in the carriage and in a loud and clear voice said that he was exceedingly thankful to them for the expressions of their love to him He was fagged out on account of the four days' continuous journey and wished to be allowed to say to them good



night. He would however be free to see them during his stay here between 3 and 5 o'clock on all days and discuss questions affecting their common good".

The Hindu had paid a striking tribute to Gandhiji on his arrival in Bombay from South Africa on January 11, 1915. It wrote: "The history of India in recent times furnished a fairly long role of distinguished men who have served their country nobly and well but no one has to his credit a record so full of glorious acts, hallowed by severe trials, tragic suffering and patriotic self-sacrifice as that which belongs to Mr. Gandhi who arrived in Bombay on Saturday last after a strenuous life of over 20 years spent in loving service in the cause of his countrymen in South Africa. Mr. Gandhi's compatriots in India have followed his eventful career during this period with great pride and satisfaction and now unite in offering him a cordial welcome back to his country after successfully demonstrating to the world the great spiritual strength underlying the principle of passive resistance".

Gandhiji had occasion to write a long letter to The Hindu the next year (1916) on an incident in Benares in which he and Mrs. Besant were involved. The incident, which occurred during a function in connection with the laying of the foundation for the Benares Hindu University was reported in The Hindu by its Benares Correspondent on February 7, 1916 as follows: "An unfortunate incident occurred last night at Benares while Mr. Gandhi was addressing the students. While speaking about anarchism and murders which he deprecated he referred to the action of the authorities in taking the most extraordinary precautions to protect the Viceroy in Benares. At this he was interrupted (by Mrs. Besant as was later disclosed) and he was asked to explain very briefly what he was about to say. But as he took a rather long time to come to the point he was leading to, all the princes present left in a body and though Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya explained to the meeting that what Mr. Gandhi was driving at was that he was ashamed himself that such a course was thought necessary because of the misdeeds of a few misguided youths, the meeting dispersed at once. Mr. Gandhi has today written a letter of explanation to the Maharaja of Dharbanga in which after expressing his regret at last night's incident he says that his sole object was to express the strong views he held against all acts of violence and the so called anarchy. 'In common with most of us', Mr. Gandhi writes, 'I feel deeply humiliated that extraordinary precautions should have been rendered necessary for the protection of the person of one of our noblest Viceroys when he was in a special sense our honoured guest in this sacred city. My mission in life is to preach and assist in securing utmost freedom for my country but never any violence to the person of any human being under the greatest provocation. My speech was therefore conceived to instill this lesson into the hearts of young men'".

"Lectures were resumed this morning", the Correspondent said, "and there was a large attendance as usual, all the princes now in Benares being present. The Maharaja of Dharbanga, who presided, made a very brief reference to last night's incident, observing they had heard with grief and pain the remarks of Mr. Gandhi and he was sure they all disapproved of the line of attitude Mr. Gandhi had taken up. Voices were heard: 'We all disapprove'".

Writing from Salem on February 10, C. Rajagopalachari referred to the "glaring headlines" given to the incident by Mrs. Besant in her paper and

said: "It is clear that there was considerable misunderstanding due to over-sensitive loyalty and hasty judgement of our Zamindars in whom a narrow prudence has established by constant mental habit a touch-me-not frame of mind in this matter, especially where travel and touch with European freedom of thought and higher culture have not corrected the influence of present day Indian aristocratic environment. Perhaps also complications of English syntax, a language foreign to most of the noble audience and a desire to be unanimous must have contributed to the unfortunate result"

C. R. added: "We are so long used to insincere speech and ineffective method that we confound these with politics and actually fear honest speech and the prospect of any actual result. The sick man is so much used to his bed that he is afraid of having to get out of it. He wants medicine just to keep him as he is and is afraid of anything that will make it necessary for him to try walking about. So we must always have our ruling princes and our well-known older leaders in politics and none else"

The Hindu published a number of letters on the Benares incident all critical of the role played by Mrs. Besant (who interrupted Gandhiji during his speech and raised a point of order)

Gandhiji wrote to The Hindu disputing the version of the incident given by Mrs. Besant in *New India* in which she had said that it was with a view to protect Gandhiji that she had interrupted him since she heard the C. I. D. officer sitting behind her whispering to her that he was writing every word that Gandhiji was saying and that they would be forwarded to the authorities.

Gandhiji wrote "Mrs. Besant denies my statement with reference to her whispering to the princes. I can only say that if I can trust my eyes and my ears I must adhere to the statement I have made. She occupied a seat on the left of the semicircle on either side of the Maharaja of Dharbanga who occupied the chair and there was at least one prince, perhaps there were two, who were sitting on her side. While I was speaking, Mrs. Besant was almost behind me. When the Maharaja rose, Mrs. Besant also had risen. I had ceased speaking before the Rajahs actually left the platform. She was discussing the incident with a group round her on the platform. I gently suggested to her that she might have refrained from interrupting but that if she disapproved of the speech, after it was finished she could have then disassociated herself from my sentiment. But she with some degree of warmth said, 'How could we sit still when you were compromising everyone of us on the platform? You ought not to have made the remarks you did'. This answer of Mrs. Besant does not quite tally with her solicitude for me which alone according to her version of the incident prompted her to interrupt the speech. I suggest that if she merely meant to protect me she could have passed a note round or whispered into my ears her advice. And again if it was for my protection why was it necessary for her to rise with the princes and to leave the hall, as I hold she did, along with them?"

Gandhiji then went on to explain what he said in the course of his speech and desired the publication of the whole of the speech "whose trend was a sufficient warrant for showing that I could not possibly incite the students to deeds of violence". Gandhiji also referred to that part of his speech in which he criticised the princes for flaunting their wealth. "I then took the audience", he wrote, "to the gorgeous scene that was enacted on the day of the foundation (for the Benares Hindu University) and suggested that if a stranger not

knowing anything about Indian life had visited the scene he would have gone away under the false impression that India was one of the richest countries in the world — such was the display of jewellery worn by our noblemen. And turning to the Maharajas and the Rajas I humorously suggested that it was necessary for them to hold those treasures in trust for the nation before we could realise our ideals and I cited the action of Japanese noblemen who considered it a glorious privilege, even though there was no necessity for them, to dispossess themselves of treasures and lands which were handed to them from generation to generation. I then asked the audience to consider the humiliating spectacle of the Viceroy's person having to be protected from ourselves when he was our honoured guest. And I was endeavouring to show that the blame for these precautions was also on ourselves in that they were rendered necessary because of the introduction of organised assassination in India. Thus I was endeavouring to show on the one hand how the students could usefully occupy themselves in assisting to rid the society of its proved defects, on the other to wean themselves even in thought from methods of violence." Gandhiji concluded: "But for Mrs. Besant's interruption I would have concluded my speech within a few minutes and no possible misconception about my views on anarchism would have arisen".

The closing period of 1916 saw the emergence of the Non-Brahmin movement in Madras Presidency under the leadership of P. Thyagaraya Chetty, Dr. T. M. Nair and others. The movement blossomed into the Justice Party in latter days and its members briefly occupied positions of power and influence encouraged by the British Government at home and in India.

The first communication about the starting of the movement was sent to The Hindu by its sponsors in the form of a manifesto and it was published in full but the paper was critical of the document. "It is with much pain and surprise that we have perused this document", The Hindu wrote. "It gives a manifestly distorted and unfair representation of many of the matters to which it makes reference. It can serve no good purpose but it is bound to create bad blood between persons belonging to the same great Indian community who have been living hitherto in perfect harmony and to whom good sense should suggest that there is nothing more suicidal at this moment and perilous to the national cause than to create causes for mutual discord and to play into the hands of the enemies of the national progress. We do not wish to open our correspondence columns to a discussion of this subject as it cannot but lead to an acrimonious controversy and as it would indirectly promote the insidious objects of some of those who are engineering the movement".

The Hindu on December 22, 1916, published a communication from Rao Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai of Gooty repudiating the manifesto issued on behalf of the Non-Brahmin movement and said: "Mr. Kesava Pillai has behind him a record of public and patriotic work which is possessed by few and his repudiation of the sentiments contained in the manifesto is especially noteworthy and deserves public attention".

The Hindu made it clear it was in sympathy with certain aspects of the Non-Brahmin movement such as the desire to advance socially, educationally and economically. What it opposed was the anti-nationalist character it had assumed. The paper wrote on September 10, 1917: "There are certain aspects of the Non-Brahmin movement which all who favour the advancement of the

country will most heartily support. They are in the direction of social and educational progress and in securing a sufficient representation of their separate interests in any scheme of political reform. We regret to have to say that the movement was made from its start to assume a sinister aspect and to adopt an attitude of active antagonism to the Brahmin community, to the nationalist movement in the country and to the aims and objects of the Congress".

We have already noted the cable sent to the Secretary of State for India by Mr Thyagaraya Chetty, one of the sponsors of the Non-Brahmin movement, opposing Home Rule and supporting the stand taken by the Madras Mail and the European community in regard to Mrs. Besant's movement

Dr. T. M. Nair, another leading light of the movement, in a lecture in Madras opposed the grant of Home Rule at the present moment and said the demand had been made only by Mrs. Besant in 1915. The Hindu controverted this view and said the demand for Home Rule or Swaraj or self-government had been made by the Congress long ago and quoted passages from Dadhabhai Naoroji's address at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906 to prove this point. Dr Nair's statement led to a controversy and many letters appeared in *The Hindu* on the subject

That Dr Nair was already in official favour and would not do anything to blast his political prospects was clear when he was nominated to the Madras city council although he was defeated in the election to that body from the Triplicane division. While recognising that Dr. Nair had done much good work as a member of the Council and had the capacity to do useful public work, *The Hindu* said it did not think Dr. Nair's nomination can be sustained on the principle on which the power to make it depended. "Much as we would like Dr. Nair to employ his talents as a member of the Corporation, it is to be regretted that he should have availed himself of the back door of nomination instead of the open door of election. His defeat at Triplicane has not barred all chances of his entering the Corporation by means of election. There are vacancies to be filled up by election on the 10th instant in no less than five wards including the one in which Dr Nair is a resident voter".

When Lord Chelmsford succeeded Lord Hardinge as Viceroy in 1916 *The Hindu* was not very enthusiastic for as it remarked Lord Chelmsford was "an unknown quantity". But the paper misjudged the man. Lord Chelmsford went down in history as the joint author of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms which introduced a measure of autonomy in the provinces.

In a memorandum to the Viceroy in October, 1916, nineteen elected non-official members of the Imperial Legislative Council, who included M. A. Jinnah, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Bhupendranath Basu, Tej Bahadur Sapru, and Madan Mohan Malaviya pointed out that "the people or their representatives are practically as little associated with the real government of the country as they were before the reforms" and added. "The position of Indians in India is practically this that they have no part or share in the direction of Government of the country and are placed under very great and galling disabilities from which the other members of the British Empire are exempted and which have reduced them to a state of utter helplessness... In the crisis we are now going through the Indian people have sunk domestic differences between themselves and the Government and have faithfully and loyally stood by the Empire... India does not claim any reward for her loyalty but she has a right to

expect that the want of confidence on the part of the Government to which she not unnaturally ascribes her present state, should now be a thing of the past and that she should no longer occupy a position of subordination but one of comradeship" The memorandum demanded that (1) half the membership of Executive Councils should be Indian and the European element should be nominated from the ranks of men trained and educated in the public life of England, (2) all legislative councils should have a substantial majority of elected members, (3) the budget should be passed in the shape of money bill and India should have fiscal autonomy; (4) the Imperial Legislative Council should have power to legislate on all matters and to discuss and pass resolutions relating to all matters of Indian administration and the provincial councils should have similar powers with regard to provincial administration; (5) the Council of the Secretary of State should be abolished, (6) in any scheme of Imperial Federation India should be given through her chosen representatives a place similar to that of the self-governing dominions, (7) the provincial governments should be made autonomous; (8) a full measure of local self-government should be immediately granted, (9) the right to carry arms should be granted

The Hindu which when it received news of the submission of the memorandum did not know its contents criticised the signatories for acting without consulting all important public leaders and ascertaining the views of the Congress but later its Simla Correspondent quoted the Secretary to the Maharaja of Coosimbazar, one of the signatories, as saying that the memorandum advocated "such constitutional changes as have formed the main planks of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League for the last half a dozen years" The Hindu subsequently published the full text of the memorandum.

We have already noted the British Government's declaration of August, 1917 and The Hindu's comment on it in the chapter relating to Mrs. Besant whose Home Rule movement was an important factor in forcing Mr. Montagu to make that declaration and also his subsequent visit to Madras as part of his tour of Indian provincial capitals. It is necessary to keep in mind the 1916 memorandum and the developments which followed for they form the background to The Hindu's fierce onslaught on the Moderates in the years following the announcement of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms.

Meanwhile, we can take a look at a Legislative Council as it functioned under the Minto-Morley reforms through the glasses of a Hindu columnist. Writing of his impressions of the Madras Legislative Council on March 31, 1915, columnist Flaneur (who has not been identified) said "From the Visitors' Gallery the scene below looked very businesslike. The horse-shoe shaped arrangements of black wood seats facing the line (at the horse-shoe's open end) in the centre of which H. E. the President's seat is placed with two long tables and bench chairs on both sides look trim and compact. In the centre of the horse shoe are two parallel benches and tables for press representatives and however bad the acoustic properties of the Council Chamber may be, every word must necessarily be heard distinctly by the reporters. To me sitting up aloft and not being able to follow very closely the whole of the proceedings, they appeared to be mechanical and lifeless. One could hear a ceaseless monotonous flow of words. The language of caustic comment and indignant condemnation, of

humble appeal and fervid declamation was all delivered in one even monotone. There was no emphatic gesture, no indication of excitement, no passion in delivery, no simulated anger. I noticed that the majority of the European members of the Council were rather lacking in the hirsute properties of the head. This indicates one of two things: that either men intellectually well endowed had by force of merit and ability found their way into the council or that the burden of the council is too much for them and is depriving them of a natural adornment. But inasmuch as the term of a Councillor is very limited it would seem that the first reason given is the right one."

# Britain's Ban on The Hindu

22

**I**N AUGUST, 1918 Kasturiranga Iyengar was invited by the Government of India to join a party of Editors from India to visit Britain and the battlefields on the Western front. A farewell address was given to him at a meeting of Madras citizens on the eve of his departure for Britain on August 23, 1918. Replying to it Kasturiranga spoke of the problems of the Indian journalist. "The life of a journalist is an arduous and perilous one", he said. "He has in the daily discharge of his duty to steer clear between sharks and shoals. In a dependant country like India while the Government views the Press—the Indian section of it—as its natural enemy—the people in general who take their cue from the Government are not warm in their recognition of the fact that the Press is an institution which is vital to the existence and growth of national life. That virtue is its own reward is the principle which finds practical illustration in the work of an Indian journalist assuming that he is of the right mettle and is devoid of the faculty of flexible adaptation to changing circumstances"

He said he accepted the British invitation despite strong consideration to the contrary from a sense of duty and in fulfilment of a long cherished desire. He made an appeal to the Moderates to attend the special session of the Congress in Bombay and said: "The Moderate leaders in this country should make up their minds to march with the times. Their past services, their patriotism and their steadying influence are undoubtedly a great asset"

G. K. Devadhar, a Marathi Editor and a member of the Editors team, later wrote of his impressions of Kasturiranga during the trip to Britain. "He had armed himself", he said, "with a large quantity of condiments, fruits, and appalams, whose real food value can only be appreciated when we are far from our dear homes. We always shared the same table, being the only two vegetarians in the party and our vegetarianism proved rather costly to the Government as in some of the towns in the West fresh vegetables were dearer than meat. But Kasturiranga Iyengar always had his dishes full of these fried *appalams* and *vadams* and I used to have a large share of them as he knew my weakness for these. He had also taken with him a large quantity of fruit which he never ate by himself but always shared with me largely". In London Kasturiranga met his friend H. S. L. Polak who took him to a vegetarian restaurant and later to a cinema which he described as a "novel and interesting experience".

The Editor of *The Hindu* visited the world's largest aircraft production factory in Hendon and was taken for a ride in an aeroplane which flew over London at a speed of 65 to 75 miles an hour. He watched the proceedings of the House of Lords and he replied on behalf of the Editors at a reception given in their honour by the Institute of Journalists. He said that neither the Press of Great Britain nor the people of England had paid any attention to the opinion of the Indian Press and it was a good augury that the Government and Press in Great Britain seemed to realise the potentialities of the Indian Press. At the very moment he was being honoured by the British Government Kasturiranga was not aware that *The Hindu* and three other nationalist papers were being banned in Britain. We shall have to say more of this later in this chapter.

On October, 16, 1918 Kasturiranga had a brief interview with Montagu, Secretary of State for India. He had already met him when the latter was in Madras in December, 1917. The topic of their discussion was Indian reforms. Kasturiranga told Montagu that his whole scheme was based on the belief that the Indian people were unfit for self-government at the present stage.

Oxford was one of the places visited by Kasturiranga Iyengar and here he met Indian students, two of them being K. P. S. Menon (later of I. C. S. and veteran diplomat) and G. K. Chettur. There was a reception in his honour at New College and there he met Sir Ernest Baker who afterwards told Chettur: "A most interesting man and I had a most stimulating talk."

After visiting the war establishments in Britain, the editors were taken to the war fronts in France and Belgium where they stayed for six days and covered 900 miles. At the time they were there the tide of war had turned against the Germans who were facing defeat. Actually, the war ended on November 11 while the Editors were still in London. During his stay in Britain, Kasturiranga made forthright speeches on the situation in India and a typical comment in India was that of the Mahratta which said: "Kasturiranga Iyengar's writings were banned entry into England, though his speeches were allowed. They have thus barred the cage and let go the lion".

Kasturiranga returned to Madras in January, 1919, via Colombo. En route he was accorded receptions at wayside stations by a grateful people who hailed him as their ambassador abroad. An address presented to him at Egmore railway station expressed surprise and resentment that "though you were invited by the Government as the Editor of *The Hindu* your own paper was not allowed to reach you and that *New India* also was intercepted. Strange that the country of Milton should be so afraid of truth". In his reply Kasturiranga said: "No Indian who feels sincere interest in the land of his birth can help feeling his sense of patriotism quickened and the desire to elevate it in the scale of nations immensely strengthened by making a tour with his eyes and ears open through the countries of Europe . . . I would earnestly recommend a European travel to every such Indian for it would stimulate him to put forth his best endeavours for his country's uplift".

Referring to the ban on *The Hindu* in Britain he said it was a "political phenomenon", the significance of which still remained a mystery to him. The Secretary of State for India who had undertaken to obtain and give the explanation for the abnormal state of things had not been able to obtain the required information by the time he left England. "I hope we shall yet get a clue to the mystery", he said. "The necessity for understanding the springs of official



action in regard to the Indian Press is further illustrated by the manner in which the Madras Government dealt with the Indian Press in its last administrative report . . . making a fresh departure of policy which cannot make for harmonious relations between the Government and the representatives of the people".

The distinction of banning the entry of *The Hindu* into its territory first really must go to the provincial Government of Burma which took this action as early as October, 1917. The Hindu came to know of the ban through a letter from the Secretary of the Burma Provincial Congress Committee who had been informed by the Chief Secretary of that Government that *The Hindu* and *New India* were banned under local Government's orders.

On receiving complaints from its subscribers in Burma, *The Hindu* wrote to the Postmaster-General of India who referred the paper to the Burma Government. On being written to, the Burma Government after some delay wrote back saying that action against *The Hindu* was taken by the local Government for reasons of public safety and tranquillity. *The Hindu* commented: "Their (Government's) action would have seemed incredible were it not that it was a fact. By hook or crook they wanted to prevent certain newspapers published in India from circulating in Burma . . . What is more remarkable still is that this monstrous perversion of the law was not only the act of the Government of Burma. It was virtually condoned and ratified by the Government of India because when a non-official member of the Imperial Legislative Council sent up an interpellation in regard to it the question was disallowed by the Governor-General. We have not been at any time concerned with the pecuniary loss occasioned by the arbitrary action of the officials in Burma in preventing the circulation of *The Hindu* in that Province. It is the deprivation of an elementary right and the exercise of arbitrary and lawless power which are involved in the action of the Government that are of deep concern to the public".

On February 7, 1919, *The Hindu* referred to an official statement in the Legislative Council in Delhi regarding Britain's ban on *The Hindu* and some other Indian papers and said it was not in accordance with facts that the prevention of entry was in each case after a perusal of each issue and consideration of its contents. "We know that copies of *The Hindu* were kept out of Great Britain for weeks and months and it is untrue to say that in every issue of *The Hindu* there was a reference to Home Rule. We have no hesitation in saying that whether the act of prohibition was by the military or civil authorities, it was an unwarranted abuse of power. The plea that the prohibition of the papers was in view of their exploitation by the German authorities for their own purposes is a futile and absurd one. We must decline to put faith in it until it is actually proved — which it is easy to do if it were a fact — that extracts from these newspapers were cited in the German Press, and made use of for sinister purposes . . . It is one of the first duties of Government that its agents do not commit abuses of power in its name. The Government of India, in our view, has failed in its duty in this respect".

The official statement in the Imperial Legislative Council referred to by *The Hindu* said that the action was taken by the Indian censorship and there had been no interference with the export of newspapers since December, 1918.

One result of Kasturiranga's trip abroad was his categorical statement at a reception given to him in Conjeevaram, citadel of Hindu orthodoxy, that

"I have no hesitation in saying that if there be any conflict between the principles of nationalism and Hinduism, which I believe there is not, I will pursue the path marked out by the former". He was referring to the fear expressed by some that by undertaking a sea voyage he had broken an important tenet of orthodox Hinduism

Hailing Kasturiranga's declaration, C Rajagopalachari in a letter to the Editor said "I trust that not only political deputations to England but every action aimed at the elevation and the good of the masses of our countrymen and the attainment of national unity and progress will be included in the category of things not to be obstructed but to be encouraged by those who heard or read this splendid exhortation".

The Hindu announced the end of the war almost a month before it actually did believing in agency reports. On October 18, 1918 it ran a double column story with a big type heading screaming, "German surrender", based on a Reuter report from Amsterdam which quoted a press report that Germany had capitulated and the Kaiser had abdicated. This report was however not confirmed and The Hindu reverting to single column featuring on leader page the next day gave these headings to a story denying German surrender "The peace question Rumour denied Lack of confirmation". Commenting on the false report The Hindu wrote "While there must be a certain amount of disappointment that the report that Germany had capitulated should have proved baseless, the public may console itself with the reflection that the statement if premature was only an intelligent anticipation of events"

In this The Hindu was proved right for within less than a month, on November 11 to be exact, it carried a three-line Reuter cable on the leader page which announced the abdication of the Kaiser. The full story broke out the next day and the news of the German surrender was splashed in a two-column box in the middle of two single column stories, one of Prime Minister Lloyd George's speech on the war at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in London, and the other a London story on the terms of peace. The box story which had a London dateline said: "The Press Bureau states: The Prime Minister announces the armistice was signed at 5 a.m. Hostilities ceased on all fronts at 11 this morning (November 11)"

The Hindu hailed the victory of the Allies in these words "The victory of the Associated Powers is the victory of civilisation over the forces of barbarism which in its greatest, as we devoutly hope in its last struggle, has exceeded all its previous records in frightfulness. Purged by the chastening fires of this conflict the German people have at last begun to find themselves and by deposing the greatest criminal in history have wiped out some portion of those sins, active and passive, which have cast the world into agony for over four years. It is for the Associated Powers so to temper justice with mercy as to take into account that the expiation is not more severe than the sins merit. It is also for them as for the newborn enemy democracies to ensure that the sacrifices of the past have not been in vain and that the world is made safe for democracy and civilisation. It is for them to win a yet greater victory than that over Germany, the victory over forces in their own countries of imperialism and national greed which in the intoxication of triumph are likely to destroy their sense of righteousness unless kept in careful check. The war would have been fought in vain if the international ideal has not replaced the national and as the

war has been of the forces of the world so must there all the world over be a triumph of righteousness and democracy over national greed and imperialist chauvinism. Humanity no less than the peoples of the Associated Powers will then voice forth the heartfelt thanksgiving "Praise be to God which giveth us the Victory"

In the next few days the columns of *The Hindu* were covered by reports of victory celebrations and post-armistice reports from Europe. The war period during which *The Hindu* provided excellent news service, weekly reviews of the war situation, maps of the battle fronts and lists of war casualties was notable for one of its never ending polemical brushes with the *Madras Mail*. Here is a *Hindu* editorial in reply to one by the *Madras Mail* on July 6, 1918. "The departure of Mr (Earle) Welby does not appear to have altered the vituperative and defamatory disposition of the *Madras Mail*. To say that educated Indians secretly cherish the hope that Germany will win is an insult to their intelligence. The alleged Bolsheviks may not love or respect the average Englishmen in this country overmuch but they most certainly have the fullest confidence in English justice and fairplay as it is to be found in England and as it is absent in the swelled head variety of bureaucrats and the *Tehinovnik* European Press which toadies to them. The Indian desirous of Home Rule and averse to kowtowing to the European, either bureaucrat or adventurer, may in the estimation of the *Madras Mail* be a Bolshevik which means everything morally and politically debasing, but the Indian is no fool which he would be if he cherished the hope of Germany winning the war. Indians will lose everything worth having in life by Germany being victorious . . . Instead of vilifying the Indian at this time it would be better for the Englishmen in India to assume that he is loyal till he proves himself otherwise".

It was not only from the Anglo-Indian Press that the nationalist papers like *The Hindu* faced bitter criticism but also from the Government and a typical example was the Madras Government's administration report for 1918 about which *The Hindu* wrote: "Taken as the despairing shriek of a bureaucracy which finds its position threatened, the introduction to the Administration Report may excite a certain amount of commiseration, but when a Government descends to the methods of mud slinging, much favoured of the baser kind of controversialist, it is time for the public to enter an emphatic protest and demand that those in authority if they cannot avoid making a muddle of the administration should at least do their muddling through with some spark of self-respect. It is hardly decent in a Government to take up a fiercely partisan attitude in a political quarrel (the reference is to the Home Rule movement led by Mrs. Besant). What then are we to think of those who made themselves responsible, as the Madras Government have done, for a report so unblushingly biased as to talk of "engineered protest meetings" to discount the force of the tide of indignation which the action of the Pentland Government rightly evoked? . . . While on this subject of the mentality that could be responsible for this amazing production which with unconscious humour calls itself the Madras Administration Report, we may refer briefly to a reference to ourselves wherein the charitable suggestion is made that Indian newspapers, *The Hindu* being the example, vary their opinions and methods of comment with a sole eye to their circulation list. To so amazing a suggestion there is no possible

reply except to ignore it and we draw attention to it only as it throws an illuminating light on the frame of mind of the author of the report"

The Hindu reported more incidents of racial discrimination, arrogance and insolence in which the victims were highly placed and distinguished Indians. One of them was the Imam-Clayton case which went to Court. The facts of the case as reported by The Hindu in January, 1919, were "Mr. Frank Clayton I.C.S., a Secretary of the Bihar Government, entered a first class compartment in a train and unable to bear the sight of an Indian comfortably sleeping on a berth, made the sleeping Indian passenger to feel "a weight on his person on the upper part of his left leg" by rudely sitting on him. Mr. Clayton realised somewhat the seriousness of his act only when he knew that the native whom he did not scruple thus to insult was Mr. Syed Hasan Imam, a gentleman who had once held office as one of His Majesty's judges of the Calcutta High Court. Mr. Clayton sought to escape out of this awkward situation by tendering a cheap apology. When he found however that Mr. Imam whose patriotic concern for the dignity of his countrymen was so rudely wounded by Mr. Clayton, could not be easily bought, Mr. Clayton in a manner unbecoming of his position not only flatly denied the accuracy of Mr. Imam's charge against him in a court of law but also had the temerity to charge Mr. Imam with a "truculent attitude and tone". Mr. Clayton later not only unreservedly withdrew all his written statements but accepted the plaintiff's allegations as substantially correct. He did better. He not only "sincerely apologised for the unfortunate incident" but left himself in the hands of Mr. Imam, to his generosity and magnanimity".

The Hindu wrote: "It cannot be forgotten that it took Mr. Clayton exactly six days to resort to this honourable course and that before he came to this conclusion he put the busy gentleman whom he so seriously insulted to all the unpleasant inconveniences of vexatious and fairly long litigation. That there are men in high position under Government employ who do not scruple to resort to such conduct is ugly enough; that they should resort to such unclean defence as that set up in this case is a fact whose significance cannot be lightly ignored. Perhaps, individually Mr. Clayton is not to blame so much as we are apt to think. His whole conduct throughout the sorry affair would appear to show that he has been the victim of a superior atmosphere which men of his position unconsciously think they are surrounded by and whose effects are only very slowly, if also steadily, wiped out".

Following this a reader supplied The Hindu with the story of another racial incident on a train, this time the Indian victim not being so passive as Mr. Imam. "An interesting story is going round", he wrote, "of a distinguished Indian judge of northern India, Mr. Justice M. who was travelling in a first class compartment. There was a European gentleman in the compartment also travelling. The judge wore removable Indian shoes of a peculiar pattern that produced a creaking noise. The European gentleman was awfully offended. He waited for an opportunity and when the Indian judge was looking out on the opposite side, he quietly took the shoes that were lying on the floor and threw them out of the window. The Indian judge, a shrewd man, noted the matter but never showed he had noticed. After a while the European gentleman took off his coat and hung it by the hook and lay down to rest. Justice M. quietly took the coat and threw it out of the window. When the European

gentleman looked for his coat it was not where he had left it. So he began to speak to the Indian Justice M. however pointed out that to attempt to speak to a gentleman without proper introduction was not etiquette. The European gentleman was beside himself and demanded his coat and watch. Justice M. coolly replied "They have gone to fetch my shoes."

Another reader in a letter spoke of an incident in Manmad railway junction on December 24, 1918. He wrote "A party of 17 delegates to the Indian National Congress held recently in Delhi reached Manmad junction at 11 a.m. on December 24 en route to Delhi. The Hon. Mr. B. V. Narasimha Aiyer of Salem was one of them. All of the party were travelling by the higher classes. There is a second class gentlemen's waiting room at the station. We left our luggage there and went to a hotel to have our meals. A coolie came running to the hotel to inform us that the station master ordered him to drive us out of the waiting room. We came to the station and asked the station master what the matter was. We were told that the waiting room was for "gentlemen" only and not for natives. The Hon. Mr. Narasimha Aiyer argued vainly with the station master saying that we were second class passengers and gentlemen. The station master was stubborn and said a native 'cannot occupy gentlemen's waiting room even if he travels first class and to say that a native is a gentleman was a presumption'. We told him plainly that we will not leave the waiting room. He went away threatening to take steps. We were wondering what the steps he threatened would be when a number of coolies came weeping to us saying that their licences and badges were taken away from them for allowing natives in the gentlemen's waiting room and imploring us to go out of it. The condition of the poor coolies was pitiable. They could not work without badges and as we did not want to be the cause for the prolongation of their misery we left the waiting room and exposed ourselves to the sun on the open platform".

The issue of *The Hindu* dated January 4, 1919 carried this police court story and the judge was an Englishman, Mr. J. C. Adams. "Sergeant Noridge of F-2 Police station brought a charge under section 71, clause 15 of the City Police Act against one Pakiri Thampiran, a pandaram (mendicant) for beating a brass gong without licence in Swami Reddi Street, Egmore Paracheri, at about 6 a.m. on January 1, 1919. His worship found the accused guilty and fined him one rupee".

A visitor to the south early in 1919 was the poet, Rabindranath Tagore who before going over to Madras visited Madurai, Tiruchi, Tanjore and Kumbakonam and was accorded popular receptions at all these places. *The Hindu* gave an extensive coverage to his tour through its correspondents but curiously enough there was no editorial on the Poet's visit.

There was a delightful reply by the poet to the Madurai civic address on February 21, 1919. Tagore said (according to *The Hindu* report) that to honour a poet was a waste of time and energy and good material for poetry best thrived under silent neglect. In any case it did not require public honour for the growth or encouragement of poetry. It was like some weeds which flourished well and grew wild without tilling the land or any other help from man. He thought that the poets should be left alone to do their own work in their seclusion and obscurity which were the best places for them. Poets should not be spoiled with too much adulation and he did not think it right that they should be encouraged especially when they knew that it was a bad example to the rest of

the population. Supposing somebody in the audience judging from the honour done to the poet that morning at once took to writing poetry from the very afternoon it would be an awful thing. Not only would a great deal of bad stuff be produced but it would interfere with the ordinary work of the town. Therefore he would ask them to keep his advice in mind when any other poet came to Madurai.

In a letter to the Editor of *The Hindu* from Bangalore on March 4, 1919, before his visit to Madras, Tagore wrote: "When I made up my mind to visit the Madras Presidency in order to come into touch with my fellow countrymen in the south, I felt the urgency of saying a few words to them about the necessities that are fundamental to India's progress on its own true line. In spite of indifferent health and my natural reluctance to make myself too conspicuous before the crowded public, I have carried out my intention in the towns which I have visited and have been overwhelmed everywhere by the kindness which I received from my friends who are unknown to me. Now the time has come when I must visit Madras before I return home. I feel sure of the kind reception that is awaiting me there, but all the same, misgivings arise in my mind when I think how the atmosphere of that town has recently been troubled by the turmoil of party politics from which I try to keep away in order to fulfil my own mission in life, for I believe that such unprofitable dust storms that neither carry the fertilising rain nor the purifying thunderflame, merely hide from our view the true vision of our path and our goal. However that may be, in order to avoid the least chance of misunderstanding, I take this opportunity of making it clear to all that I do not belong to any political party whatsoever and that what I have to say to my countrymen is not of the present moment or of the prevailing political unrest. I have never felt any attraction for devising means to build the machinery for extracting favours from unwilling hands, thus perpetuating the cult of moral servitude and making our people live in the most unhealthy mental atmosphere of continual alternations of hope and despair. It has ever been my endeavour to find out how to develop the power in ourselves by which we can truly earn the gratitude of mankind and win our place as those who give out of their abundance and do not solely rely upon the doles of half hearted charity".

Tagore came to Madras on March 10 and spoke to an overflowing audience at the Gokhale Hall. A tribute to the poet was paid by the Editor of *The Hindu* when he unveiled a portrait of Tagore at the Madras Christian College Students Home on March 16. Kasturiranga Iyengar said India "is proud of him as a most gifted poet, sage and an inspired prophet of nationalism".

On September 9, 1918 there were food riots in Madras. *The Hindu* reported looting of food shops, vegetable markets and grocery shops in Kotewal Bazaar, Moore Market, Triplicane, Mylapore and various other areas of the city. *The Hindu* said the looters appeared to be bent on forcing the hands of Government to adopt protective measures against inflation and profiteering. There was no mob violence. The looters went about their task gaily and permitted others to share in the general plunder. The contempt for the police unless they were armed was very apparent, the report said: "What were the police about? It is their duty to inspire confidence and afford protection and unless the bazars are promptly opened it is clear they have failed in their duty". The report added. "It does no credit to the head of the police that a few

unarmed factory hands should be able to disorganise the trade of the city and be allowed to terrorise bazar keepers for so long as two days. It is especially discreditable when it is considered that the looting was spoken of as a possibility three or four days ago."

The Hindu commenting on the situation said "The Governor finds it convenient to tour Calicut and to preside at meetings at which the wealthy subscribe liberally while when the poor are suffering and unable to make both ends meet, the Governor and his Councillors are enjoying the climate of Ootacamund and are oblivious to their sufferings. A notification by Government of a prompt return of His Excellency to the city would do more to remedy matters, provided measures are taken to relieve the pressure of high prices and food scarcity".

The situation in Madras city continued to be bad for some more days and the trouble spread to mofussil centres. The authorities blamed the politicians for the food riots saying that through their agitation they had weakened the respect for authority and belief of the people in the efficiency and capacity of the Government.

The Hindu's reply to this was "We consider it grossly unfair to state that Indian politicians who demand reforms in a perfectly constitutional manner delight in seeking deliberately to weaken the authority of the state. They know too well the dangers of anarchy, their respect for legally constituted authority is too genuine to do anything like that, and the very fact they are never tired of invoking the authority of the state to set matters right argues not that they have no belief in the capacity of the Government but that they have every faith in its power and authority and that it should be so maintained. Statesmanship required that Government should have expressed their sympathy with the people without any qualification whatever and proceeded to discuss their suggestions in a welcome and sympathetic spirit. Far from doing this, the Government have issued a most unfortunately worded communique hardly calculated to inspire confidence in the people".

It was about this period that The Hindu laid down its policy toward labour which was far in advance of the thinking in those days and reflected the warm sympathy and concern for labour welfare which had always been expressed by its Editor, Kasturiranga Iyengar.

The Hindu wrote. "Co-partnership and consequent co-operation is the only solvent of the difficulties always arising, between labour and capital. It is certain, however, that even in such a close relationship there will arise cause for misunderstanding and discontent. Personal feelings and predilections and animosities will wreck any scheme but when Labour is generally contented such feelings are less likely to do harm than they would when the employees are in a permanent don't care-a-button and damn-the-company, mind. What is meant by co-partnership of Labour and Capital is that Labour should be given a share in the excess profits when such profits are the result of Labour. When these excess profits are absorbed by Capital, Labour feels aggrieved and efforts slacken, discontent deepens, disaffection and suspicion and hostility manifest themselves openly in strikes, incendiary assaults etc. It is unwise for the employees of any concern to feel that they are being exploited in favour of the Capitalists. Labour realises in such cases that Capital benefits both by the value of dividends and the market price of the shares. . . . In any scheme of co-partnership, a spirit of compromise should

prevail, concessions should be made and fairness and sincerity for the welfare of the employees should characterise Capital-Labour relations. This co-operation like Mercy blesses those who give and those who receive and the success of the business is assured. Capital should make every effort to associate itself more intimately with Labour, to recognise that Labour has its rights and privileges and the sooner these rights and privileges are admitted and concessions made towards ameliorating the conditions of Labour the better it will be for the industrial expansion of the country”



**T**HE PUBLICATION OF the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals for Reform in July, 1918, led to the secession of the Moderates (or Liberals as they chose to call themselves) from the Congress. The Moderates who were for accepting the reforms unconditionally were apprehensive that by its attitude the Congress might endanger their introduction by the British Government. And they became the target of The Hindu for a persistent and merciless attack which became fiercer and more bitter with the Government's repressive policy following the Punjab happenings and Gandhiji's non-co-operation movement, in all of which the Moderates — The Hindu said they were "Moderate only in patriotism" — stood as staunch supporters of the Government.

In the history of The Hindu its long and unrelenting battle with the Moderates will remain as one of the finest chapters in which the paper used all its eloquence, mastery of the English language, its forensic skill, vituperative power and an unmatched exhibition of patriotism and love of liberty, even to the extent of courting the extreme displeasure of authority (which demanded a security from the paper for its criticism of Government) to expose the betrayal of the country's interests by the Moderates. And it so happened that among the Moderates the man chosen for the worst treatment was the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (as we shall see later).

The Montagu-Chelmsford proposals mainly envisaged a form of dyarchy in the provinces, that is, partial provincial autonomy and there was to be no responsible Government at the centre. Commenting on the proposals The Hindu wrote: "The long expected publication of the reforms proposals will be received by the Indian public with feelings of profound disappointment. The report... exceeds their worst anticipations. It casts a blight upon their most cherished aspirations. It renders futile the pledges given by H. M's Government in their pronouncement of last August and it gives an insulting response to the Indian national demand... In our opinion the present proposals cannot constitute any scheme or part of a scheme of responsible Government. The scheme of Provincial Government proposed, in our opinion, is novel, reactionary and disastrous to the interests of the people and of good Government".

The Hindu published the text of the Report in a six-page supplement and altogether wrote six leading articles on successive days analysing and

dissecting the proposals. It wrote another series of five articles on the powers given to the bureaucracy under the proposed reforms and the mischief they were capable of. It began the last article in the series thus "When the lion and the lamb shall sit at a common table and discuss and demonstrate the advantages of a vegetarian diet, then will bureaucracy act of its own volition in concert with the opinion of the people — a people from whom it is divided from barriers of race, to whose representatives it has persistently denied any political capacity and whose progress is so directly dependent upon its readiness to surrender not only its own powers but of principles dear to its heart such as the white man's burden and the pre-ordained servitude of the tropical races."

We have tried to show, we hope successfully, that under the scheme a tax is laid upon not only the bureaucracy's good sense but upon its higher feelings that humanly speaking is excessive and that consequently the scheme carries with it the postulates of failure. If this estimate appears exaggerated we can only ask the public to consider what is the nature of the guarantees that are provided against the misuse of bureaucratic power which we hold must be the natural sequel of the discretion vested in that body. However they might disguise it, the authors cannot get away from the position that either we are fit for self-government or we are not, there is no such thing in history or political science as conditional self-government. We can understand therefore the authors wishing the (statutory) commission . . . to determine the possibility of the next step forward. We cannot certainly see logic or justice, once the scheme is started on its way, in requiring any enquiry into the necessity for retracing steps already taken. It appears to us that unless there is a fundamental change in terms of reference of the proposed commission, neither the public nor the councils could consent to subject themselves to such humiliating probation. In any case as long as the possibility of a retrogressive step exists, we must reckon on the bureaucracy attempting, in ways such as we have pointed out, to recover its ascendancy."

Efforts were made in August, 1918 on the eve of the special Congress session in Bombay, to have an understanding with the Moderates on the reforms issue, but they ended in failure and the Moderates did not attend the Congress but met in a conference of their own. The Hindu, which was pained by the Moderates' attitude wrote on August 29, 1918. "The absurdity of the position taken up by them (Moderates) is transparent; it is obviously ridiculous to base the justification for secession on what a body of individuals is likely to do or not do; the split has not yet occurred, it can only happen at the Congress if there is irreconcilable conflict of opinion; . . . the Moderates could secede if rejection were decided upon in the Congress. It is a sight for the Gods to see a body of Indian politicians breaking themselves away from a national assembly on account of prospective imaginary differences and thus throwing an ill-founded doubt on the well known power of collective deliberation, free discussion, and mutual exchange of thought in bringing about union and reconciliation among serious minded persons anxious to promote the cause of the country and alive to the dangers of recrimination and rupture at a most critical crisis like the present".

Reverting to the same topic on August 30, 1918, under the heading: "The Great Betrayal", The Hindu wrote: "We are aware that the Moderates base their action upon the argument that the scheme of reform is endangered, but no

sane person who has compared the criticisms of the scheme by the Moderate side with those from the Extremist could tolerate such a position for a moment. Between uncritical intransigence and indiscriminate eulogy there is a vast volume of sober opinion which concentrates attention on the defects of the scheme, seeking not to destroy but to improve. In this category are included the vast bulk of so called Moderates and Extremists and yet when it comes to the question of putting to coherent shape this volume of criticism and giving it the stamp of authoritative endorsement from the only body which is recognised as national, the Moderates have hung back, thus seeking to stultify the authority of the Congress to speak on behalf of a united India. It is a psychology hard to understand from the standpoint of patriotism or indeed of any other except that of wounded vanity."

Referring to the role played by Srinivasa Sastri The Hindu said: "The Moderates were faced with the alternatives of either a united Congress or the wrecking of the scheme and they chose to split the Congress rather than risk the indefinite postponement of reforms. We are not as pessimistic on this question of withdrawal of the scheme as the Moderates. There are occasions on which it is wiser to let go the bird in hand and pin our hopes on those in the bush, but the Hon. Sastri surely betrays some deficiency in those generous instincts the lack of which among our politicians he has so often deplored, in thus too easily taking it for granted that the solemn pledge of the British people, could or would be left unredeemed even if the present scheme were withdrawn. Such a suspicious attitude surely befits better the rank extremist than one who is unhesitatingly prepared to pledge our future on the good faith and goodwill of the bureaucracy".

In a reference to Sastri's politics in another editorial The Hindu wrote "We distrust his politics because we believe them to be based more upon expediency than on principles".

The Special Congress session in Bombay on August 30, 1918, reaffirmed that "nothing less than self-government within the Empire will satisfy the Indian people and by enabling it to take its rightful place as a full and self-governing nation in the British Commonwealth strengthen the connection between Great Britain and India".

Speaking on the reform scheme in the Congress, Tilak said "We asked for 8 annas of responsible Government. This report gives me one anna of responsible Government and says that it is better than 8 annas of responsible Government".

The position of the Moderates was spelt out by Surendranath Banerjee when he presided over the Moderates' conference in Bombay on November 1, 1918. "We are the friends of evolution and the enemies of revolution", he said. "We abhor revolutions alike in our interests and those of the Government. We deprecate all methods calculated to develop or strengthen the forces of revolution. The longer the dues of nations are kept in arrears the heavier becomes the payment. For the truth cannot too often be repeated — it should be burnt in upon the souls of men in authority — that reforms indefinitely postponed or inadequate in their scope and comprehension prepare the ground for revolution. They are the seedlings upon which the revolutionary instinct feeds and from which it derives its sustaining and vitalising influence. The Moderate party is the friend of stable and orderly progress, resolute in its

denunciation of methods which in the name of liberty are calculated to weaken the foundation of social and political order, strengthen the hands of the Executive Government for purposes of repression and offer a plea for postponing the day of India's political emancipation. Our creed is co-operation with the Government whenever practicable and opposition to its policy and measures when the supreme interests of the motherland require it. Our guiding principle is. Co-operate when we can; criticise when we must. It is not Criticise when we can, and co-operate when we must. We deprecate opposition for the sake of opposition. Opposition must always produce excitement and unrest and is justified only by the ample reward of all legitimate opposition which is the redress of national grievances and the enlargement of popular rights. It is because the leaders of the present day Congress movement will not recognise the change, the profound change in the spirit and policy of the Government and persist, despite the altered condition, in a campaign of opposition, that we here on this platform are holding a separate conference of our own, where in an atmosphere of harmony, of unity of views, ideals and aspirations, we can formulate our proposals with regard to the great constitutional issues with which we stand confronted today."

Referring to the secession of the Moderates from the Congress, Surendranath Banerjee said: "We could not but secede, for differences between those who had captured the machinery of the Congress — call them extremists for want of a better term — and ourselves were fundamental and that upon a matter equally fundamental — of supreme and vital importance — namely the question of self-government for India. The Congress was an organisation for the attainment of self-government. . . The Congress exists — the Congress was called into being — for the attainment of self-government. But we knew that extreme views would prevail at its last special session; we knew the scheme would be condemned there and the interests of Responsible Government jeopardised. The Congress was a means to an end, the attainment of self-government. We sacrificed the means for the end, the organisation of the Congress for the sake of self-government in India."

On the merits of the Reform scheme he said. "We regard the proposals in common with the various legislative councils in the country as an advance upon the existing state of things and a definite stage towards the progressive realisation of responsible Government. We press for modification and expansion on the lines of the message of August 20, 1917 . . . If unfortunately no advance is made, I trust this will not be the case, even then we shall be ready to accept the scheme as an improvement upon the existing stage of things and an advance (it may be only a small advance) towards responsible Government".

We have quoted Surendranath Banerjee's address in such detail as it was the bedrock on which the Moderates based their policy of co-operation with the British Government even in the worst days of repression against the Nationalist forces and to understand the *raison d'être* for The Hindu's unmitigated attack on the Moderates' position.

The Hindu regretting the action of the Moderates in deserting the Congress and adopting an attitude which was inimical to the interests of the nation wrote: "At a great national crisis, when unity was essential, when the abiding interests of the country demanded that India should speak with one voice, a small section of Congressmen grown deaf in the service of the country, chose

to adopt a stultifying course of action which posterity is sure to condemn as extremely unwise and mistaken. The split was also brought about in a manner which no impartial student of popular institutions can fail to characterise as petulant and unreasoning.

"Having seceded from the Congress under apprehensions almost all of which have been proved to be groundless and imaginary the Moderates, at their wits' end to justify the holding of a 'separate conference', are obliged to have recourse to special pleadings with all its attendant evils — over-statement, exaggeration of differences and under-statement of essential agreements. The easy assumption that the Moderates attending the conference alone constituted the mature and better mind of the country is too ridiculous and absurd to need any refutation at our hands. The case of those who stand stupefied at the remarkable change of spirit in the people today, betokening self-respect, dignity and self-consciousness is that of men who do not move with the times, whose minds are not elastic and do not broaden at the impact of new national longings and aspirations and who lack the mental alertness and full blooded enthusiasm to respond to new impulses and assess the value of novel forces. It is political purlblindness of an inexcusable kind to distort out of all proportion small differences in order to justify the course of action followed and the talk about the existence of fundamental differences when the special Congress was composed of all shades of opinion is meaningless, if not mischievous. The attitude revealed by these stultifying declarations is neither healthy, nor wise and political progress would become impossible if the nation habitually endorses and welcomes whatever advance the rulers may choose to propose without any reference to its merits, its sufficiency to satisfy present requirements and its potential good. Notwithstanding the fact that Moderates represented by these spokesmen desire to monopolise political prescience and sagacity, the country as a whole has solemnly arrived at the definite conclusion that the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme should be modified in the directions suggested at the last special session of the Congress before it can be expected to start India on the road to responsible Government. . . Indiscriminate approval such as is put forward for adoption in the addresses under notice is tantamount to ignoble surrender however much this suicidal policy may be draped in rhetorical flourishes."

Writing again on the Moderates' conference on November 4, 1918 The Hindu said: "The conference of the Moderates, moderate so far as we can see only in their patriotism, has now concluded its session and the proceedings offer an indisputable proof of how little there is in common between the loquacious gentlemen who took part in the conference and the rest of educated India. . . They (addresses at the conference) are rather suggestive of glorifications of the past services and the ineffable wisdom of the few "leaders" who have chosen to break away from comradeship with the more democratic mind of the country and set up a party of their own, a party which has no more popular sanction behind it than the approval of a gratified bureaucracy and — incidentally let us remark — their own sense of what is due to their past services and present intrinsic importance. . . There is obviously here no question of acceptance or rejection of the scheme. India by reason of her position can only accept and has no right to refuse any scrap of reform, however insignificant. At best she can only try and beg for the little more that

will satisfy her. And how far do these excellent gentlemen who represent the quintessence of all political wisdom, interpret practically the political mind of India. They demand certain changes in the Government of India under the scheme. Their political craftsmanship could go no further than to pitch upon the very point on which there is likely to be the greatest resistance. It certainly is queer strategy which, with forces contemptible when compared to its opponent's, chooses the strongest point in the enemy's dispositions and hopes by no other support than the intensity of its faith, to prevail."

The Hindu on another occasion warned against the practice of self-depreciation which seemed to characterise the conduct of some educated Indians. "The dangers of national self-depreciation are at least as great and suicidal as the dangers of what may be called its opposite, namely, national self-conceit, for if the latter makes the nation blind to its own defects and the merits in others, the former sweeps away its individuality and develops in it an impotent, undiscerning slave mentality. It is of the utmost importance therefore for a country to study its culture carefully, develop it in the light of its felt, real as opposed to affected, experience. A just appreciation of national culture and its direction along lines which experience chalks for it as evolution proceeds are incumbent on a nation at all times. At this stage of our country's development, it has a greatly enhanced interest. Our civilisation is at present sought to be discredited not because its critics are actuated by an earnest desire to search out the truth that is in it but because they want to establish that India is semi-civilised for a political purpose. Let us at any rate avoid the habit of speaking of the achievements of our ancients in a deprecatory tone. Let us understand and adapt the outward forms of our culture to new circumstances as they arise in the light of our expanding experience, not lightly destroying its essential principle of self-realisation and unity in which are summed up the highest moral virtues of equality, self-sacrifice, consideration for others and so forth that have been evolved out of the world's civilisation. That is not stagnation but wisdom. That is true reform."

As the political reforms were on the anvil the agitation against the Rowlatt Bills (about which we have already mentioned in a previous chapter) in India assumed new dimensions. Speaking at a meeting in Madras on January 31, 1919, held to protest against the Rowlatt bills, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyer, noted lawyer, said the first part of the bills set at nought rules of evidence and the justice of the jury system. The second part placed the liberty of the subject at the sweet will and pleasure of the executive. The third part gave powers to Government to arrest people and seize property without even the guarantee of an appeal.

The Hindu's comment. "It is a well-grounded apprehension that the two sedition bills will prove destructive to the personal liberties of the people, will impair the sense of personal freedom and sap the elements which go to make up national solidarity and resentment among the best and most reflective minds in the Indian community. The extended scope of definition given to sedition in the proposed legislation is a monstrous and perverse addition to the criminal law for which no parallel can be found in any civilised country. Statutory recognition is also sought to be given to the most absurd theory that association with a man once convicted of sedition is to be reprobated and it is made a ground for establishing the guilt of an accused person. The

circumstances under which this provision is sought to be incorporated in the law would seem to furnish ground for suspecting that it is aimed at well known and esteemed public men such as Mr Tilak and Mr B C Pal and some others considering that the proposed law is based upon the Rowlatt Committee report which has largely occupied itself with attacks upon these persons behind their backs. The legislation is one which is of the most reactionary and repressive character. There is no immediate necessity for it and it is most inopportune considering the fact that we are on the eve of the inauguration of a reform scheme and of a legislative assembly which will, according to the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, more truly represent the whole of British India than the present council."

When the Imperial Legislative Council referred the Rowlatt bills to a select committee on February 10, 1919, *The Hindu* wrote: "No Indian question has evoked such unanimous and indignant protest throughout the country as the pernicious piece of legislation embodied in the Rowlatt bills. . . No honest and candid critic can attach weight to the conclusions of the Rowlatt Committee considering the fact that the President of the Committee (Sir James Rowlatt) is a man utterly ignorant of Indian conditions, one whose judicial record in England is by no means above reproach, that the other members of the Committee are more or less the creatures of the Indian bureaucracy, that the proceedings of this Committee were held in camera, that the records upon which they chose to act were those framed by the Police and the evidences such as it was that was placed before them was not subjected to cross-examination or to any of the usual tests which are necessary to distinguish truth from falsehood. . . Nothing shows the absurdity of the present system of administration in the country more clearly than that on every available opportunity Englishmen who have no acquaintance whatsoever with Indian conditions are trotted out to advise and to help to solve Indian problems. That the Government is wholly irresponsible to Indian popular opinion has been often demonstrated but never more so than in the present case"

The Rowlatt bills were passed into law in March, 1919 and Gandhiji called upon the nation to observe April 6 as "Protest day" against the "iniquitous piece of legislation" as *The Hindu* described it. A pledge which was to be taken on that day said: "Being conscientiously of opinion that the bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (amendment) Bill No 1 of 1919 and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill No. II of 1919 are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of the community as a whole is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a committee hereafter to be appointed may think fit and we further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property".

*The Hindu* featured Gandhiji's appeal in a three-column box on the Leader page. It carried a seven-column report of the observance of "Satyagraha Day" in Madras city on April 6, 1919 under a seven column banner heading, "Satyagraha Day". There were smaller single column headings: "Demonstration in Madras", "Unprecedented Gathering", "Protest against Rowlatt Act". "The city of Madras yesterday (April 6) observed the Satyagraha Day", said the

report, "in a manner worthy of the great national event. A day of humiliation and prayer, yet withal a day of hope and trust in the spirit of Satyagraha which always conquers and never fails, the citizens of Madras, men, women and children, old and young, the feeble and the strong of all classes, castes and creeds, with but few exceptions, participated in the observance and carried out the injunctions of Mahatma Gandhi whose spiritual force saturated the whole of the city yesterday".

The report then described the hartal, the closure of markets and shops and the bhajan parties and also fishermen who missed their catch for the day "On and on", the report said, "as our representative went round the city, the same event was perceptible, not a single shop was seen open, not even the street vendors, nor even the women vegetable sellers, nor even the Kannada butter-milk sellers, nor the salt and oil vendors, not even the betel and bidi shops, nor the soda water boxes were found open. Everywhere the same unconquerable spirit of Satyagraha pervaded".

The report went on to mention the huge gathering in the Triplicane beach in the evening when a meeting was held and said. "It is not consistent with the spirit of Satyagraha to say one harsh word of the few scoffers whether they were among the ruling classes or among our own countrymen who did not believe in the possibility of a day like yesterday. It is to be hoped that God had granted them the vision particularly to witness the sights of yesterday and if they had it we do feel they have become chastened, corrected and convinced of the un wisdom of their unjust prophecies. . . There were those who for certain thought that the appeals to observe Satyagraha published in the posters were an incitement to rebellion and called upon the authorities to intervene and take strong action. We do hope that if they are our countrymen they are not very proud of their conduct and that as a consequence of the lesson taught by the people yesterday they will go down in sack cloth and ashes and do penance for the slander and the insult which these incitements to the authorities implied".

Kasturiranga Iyengar who presided over the monster meeting said that it rejoiced his heart to see such an unprecedented gathering, "I wish it had been truly a day of rejoicing. If it had been a day in which we had the right of self-government granted to us it would have been truly joyful to me". He renewed his faith in the British Government and said "Whatever the local agents of H. M's Government may do in this country I think there is great cause for hope that our interests will be best promoted by appealing to H. M's Government in Great Britain. I have every confidence that an appeal from the whole country will be listened to with sympathy and it will be responded to liberally by the great British nation".

On the page opposite to the Leader Page, The Hindu featured reports from mofussil centres of celebration of "Satyagraha Day" with a five-column heading, "Day of Humiliation", and another five-column heading, "Mofussil Demonstrations".

Commenting on the events of the day, The Hindu wrote. "The absolute spontaneity of the movement, its vast scale, the tremendous enthusiasm which it has aroused, the unimpeachable sincerity and honesty of purpose of those who took part in it — and no attempt was made to misrepresent the nature of the legislation — all these unmistakably show the intensity of feeling in the



country in respect of the obnoxious measures passed by the official members of the Legislative Council in the teeth of non-official opposition. If the Government of India make any pretence of responding to public opinion in the country, then they could not, consistent with such a view of their rule, allow these measures to remain in the statute book any longer. Similarly, if the royal veto is of any useful purpose then in the opinion of the people of this country, H M's Government would find no more justifiable use for it than in regard to this most ill-advised piece of legislation"

Thus did Satyagraha pioneered by Gandhiji in South Africa make its appearance in India and Madras with many other cities in the country had its first hartal, the forerunner of many more such demonstrations in the battle for freedom, many of them bloody through official brutality but all of them peaceful and orderly. The Hindu published full reports of the progress of the movement in Bombay and other centres and also the rules and regulations for civil disobedience framed by the Satyagraha Committee.

Gandhiji was arrested near Delhi on April 9, 1919, after he had indicated his intention to disobey an order which prohibited him from entering Delhi or the Punjab. News of his arrest was sent to The Hindu from Muttra by one Dwarakadas and Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji's Secretary. The news was splashed as a double column story with the heading "Mahatma Gandhi arrested". The Hindu wrote that the arrest was an indication of how the Government proposed to deal with the question which was agitating the public mind. "It would appear that they seek to establish the truth of the notorious theory enunciated by Lord Chelmsford himself in his interview with Mr. Gandhi that the British rule in India rested not on the principle of administration approved on the whole to be just in spite of wide deviation in practice, not on the strength of any moral support behind it, but on the force of British arms pure and simple. For the Defence of India Act, passed at first as a war measure by the Legislature, later to be interpreted by the Executive to be applicable to revolutionaries and political suspects, then applied to persons who were obnoxious to the bureaucracy but against whom a conviction could not be secured in an ordinary court of law, now has been used against the holiest, saintliest, the gentlest and the most revered of living Indians. If Mr. Gandhi were the ring leader of a set of dangerous revolutionaries then no one would complain against the application of the Act to him. Far from being any such, Mr. Gandhi's personality is a purifying one, and there can be no deadlier enemy to the taint of revolutionary anarchism than Mr. Gandhi's influence"

Gandhiji was however released after being taken to Bombay and he was served with an order not to leave the Bombay Presidency.

On April 11, 1919, disturbances broke out in Amritsar following the arrest of Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, Punjab Congress leaders and martial law was proclaimed in Amritsar and Lahore on April 14. And then followed the atrocities on peaceful people by the army, the Jallianwalabagh massacre and many other shameful deeds under the regime of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. The Hindu was not aware when it wrote the following article of the full extent of official onslaught on the people, the orgy of violence and terror let loose on the people of the Punjab. It was to write on it later. But on April 15 it referred to the introduction of the Martial Law and said: "The lesson of Amritsar and Lahore is plain to read. No Government can afford to ignore public opinion for any

length of time. It cannot destroy an agitation by driving it underground. The shooting of people in Delhi was followed by mob excesses at Lahore and Amritsar. Strong action against leaders in the latter case only ended in removing the restraining element in an inflammatory population. It is clear therefore that coercion can never be an adequate weapon against agitation even if applied with a firmness proportioned on the accumulated indignation of a whole syndicate of Anglo-Indian Editors. Nor is the matter solved by calling the leaders of the movement murderers by deputy since the responsibility lies most directly on those who having given occasion to the agitation insist on fanning it into a conflagration by acts of repression as meaningless and in the result as criminal as the deportation of leaders."

Worried and pained by the Government's repressive policy, *The Hindu* on April 17 appealed to the Viceroy "to put aside the sword for the sceptre of justice and truth" "That the feeling between the Government in this country and Indians is very strained is not to be doubted", it wrote. "In all sincerity and with the full consciousness of our responsibilities we implore the Government of India to pause before they seek to suppress discontent by resorting to more repression. Not that Indians are able to resist the might of England. We do not dare to threaten for the best of all reasons. Rather we beseech a statesman-like handling of the situation in the interest of the people of this country, though the thunderbolt in the form of a resolution published in the *Gazette of India* extraordinary fills us with dismay and shatters this hope. To make a desolation and call it peace, to hush free speech and curb free action and to call it law and order, to demand submission and servility and to call it loyalty is easy but is it worthwhile? Will such things not breed their own crops of evil? . . . Lord Chelmsford is a soldier and force, he is alleged to have told Mr. Gandhi, was the power that was more potent in India than moral force in which are included justice, pure and undefiled, truth without casuistry or evasion and sympathy and trust towards and in all men without regard to race, colour, creed or language. But force, as the war has just proved, is vain and England's prestige in India should not rest on force but on the affection the people bear for the justice and humanity of England's sway. We should be glad to think that Mr. Gandhi misunderstood Lord Chelmsford. We ask the Viceroy to put aside the sword for the sceptre of justice and truth and then all will be well".

On April 19, 1919, Gandhiji sent a telegram to C. Rajagopalachari (which was reproduced in *The Hindu*) announcing his decision to suspend the civil disobedience movement "temporarily owing to the critical situation that has developed. Really operative part of the movement, namely, preaching of truth and nonviolence continues"

*The Hindu* said: "The Indian public realises its duty to rally to the side of the Government in order to maintain law and order and Mr. Gandhi has suspended the civil disobedience part of the movement, not because of its connection with the nefarious occurrences which have happened recently, but because it is the duty of every Satyagrahi to actively assist in restoring peace and preventing riots. . . . Acts of barbarous violence there have been and stern measures, we repeat, should be taken to deal with such outbreaks. But it is open to grave doubt whether the legitimate bounds have not been greatly and regretfully overstepped by the authorities, egged on to this purpose by the shrieking Anglo-Indian Press.

"The situation in the Punjab more than in any other disturbed part of the country, is very serious indeed and there is urgent necessity for the Government to assuage public feeling which is one of poignant grief and acute panic throughout the country. Restoration of public confidence is only possible if the Government promptly appoints an impartial commission to enquire into the reign of terror in the Punjab"

The Hindu warned the British Government on May 2, 1919 that reforms and repression could not go together. Referring to the Reforms Bill before Parliament it asked "Frankly speaking, has the bill which is expected to be introduced shortly, any chance of that calm, dispassionate and earnest consideration at the hands of Indians which English statesmen expect, when the whole country is agitated over the Rowlatt Act, when in parts of the country, terrorism prevails and local Governments are in a mood not to tolerate fearless expression of honestly held views? If a calm atmosphere was essential at the time of Mr. Montagu's visit in 1917, it is essential a thousand times more so when the British Government proposes to take the first operative step to place India on the road to self-government. . . . The British Government may, of course, prepare a bill of reforms, introduce it in Parliament and even pass it into law but it will have no semblance of popular sanction in India behind it, having been brought into being with a muzzled press in India and a people cowed down".

And then The Hindu wrote on May 8 a spirited article on the official atrocities in the Punjab which brought on its head the wrath of the Madras Government which demanded a security of Rs. 2000 from its printer and publisher as we shall see later. This is what The Hindu wrote. "As the steady trickle of carefully filtered news from the Punjab accumulates one gathers that things are being done in the name of law and order which, unless their necessity is established to a far more convincing extent than at present, are bound to have very grave consequences for the future peace and contentment of this country. Public opinion always ready to support strong measures in the restoration of order is beginning to view with resentment and dismay the manner in which martial law is being applied. Tyrannical methods are not sanctified because they are applied by a British Colonel and sanctioned by an Irish satrap. One wonders in these days if there is a Central Government at all and if it has any policy at the back of its mind apart from an invertebrate surrender to the provincial (hot) heads of the administration. . . . The Indian public has had grave doubts as to whether the state of things in the Punjab at any time justified the title "open rebellion". They have no doubt that at present such a title is an absolute misnomer. Sir Michael O'Dwyer has had his fling. Is it not possible for the Viceroy to frame a policy that will alleviate the bitterness in the public mind? Harmonious relations between government and the people, necessary at all times for progress, is now doubly so and not merely for the prosperity of the Indian Empire but for its very existence. . . . If blood and money be the price of confidence and trust, Punjab has paid it in full measure and brimming over. . . . If it is the duty of the people to co-operate in the restoration of order it is no less the duty of the state to make such co-operation possible. There is a point of persistence beyond which justice degenerates into vindictiveness and any further tales of the exploits of the "no d-d-nonsense" school will only serve to convince the public that the point has been reached and passed"

The demand for security from *The Hindu* was revealed in an editorial note on May 21. It was stated that a notice under the Indian Press Act issued by the Chief Presidency Magistrate at the instance of the Madras Government to show cause why a security of Rs. 2000 should not be deposited was served on May 20 on K. Srinivasan, Printer and Publisher of *The Hindu*. The action was taken, it was added, in connection with a leading article on May 8 on Punjab affairs and the report of a lecture on the subject by Mr. Govardhan Das of Lahore published in *The Hindu* on the same day.

The *Hindu's* comment was: "We have been struck with amazement that the Madras Government should have taken offence at the publication of these articles. The affairs in the Punjab and the terrible persecution of various sorts to which the people in that province are now being subjected are the topic of conversation of the man in the street throughout the country. The miserable plight of our fellow citizens, the duty of the Central Government not to permit the abrogation of well known principles of law and justice in its own interests as well as those of the people at large, are matters which it is the legitimate function of an honest journalist to dwell upon. The Madras Government perched on the blue hills of Ooty were not in a better position to form an opinion on Punjab affairs and had no higher interests to subserve than journalists who are imbued with a true love of their own country toiling on the plains and deriving information from various sources. . . Lord Willingdon (Governor) has not, we fear, got into touch with his surroundings and learnt to appraise the value of the proposal and counsels given to him. He is not evidently in possession of the fact that *The Hindu* is an Indian journal of very wide repute and circulation in the country. As a matter of fact its popularity as shown by the extent of its circulation has never been so high as at the present moment. As a frank and fearless exponent of public opinion it has come into collision with the members of the Madras Government both collectively and individually. We feel no doubt that the action of the Madras Government in putting the Press Act into operation against *The Hindu* on account of the articles on Punjab affairs is a violent stretch of the arbitrary power conferred by the Act. It is a gross and dangerous infringement of the liberty of the Press and if the present policy is continued it must lead to the extinguishment of honest and independent journalism in the country. So far as *The Hindu* is concerned the contemplation of a perverted application of the Press Act and the involving of it into further pains and penalties will not have the result of inducing it to swerve from its past traditions and the path of journalistic independence and rectitude which it has always maintained. It may have to close down on account of bureaucratic intolerance and the harsh misapplication of an unjust law. It is the public that is vitally interested in the maintenance of a free and high principled Press . . . and it is they that must by their efforts show that they deserve a true guardian of their liberties in the organ of public opinion which they cherish and maintain. It has been suggested to us that the action now taken against *The Hindu* is because a reference to the affairs of the Punjab is particularly obnoxious to the Government of India and that an avoidance of such matter would be appreciated in the ethereal regions and would not land *The Hindu* in future trouble. We consider the pseudo-friendly advice as adding insult to injury. *The Hindu* does not intend to abdicate its function in any particular so long as the Press Act does not strangle it altogether."

On May 26, The Hindu published a letter from Dr S Subramania Aiyer on the demand for security from The Hindu. "We have great pleasure", said The Hindu, "in publishing the following lines from our most esteemed countryman, Dr S Subramania Aiyer. His name stands foremost in the ranks of Indian patriots, as one who has done most distinguished work in the public life of the country and also done meritorious service to the Government and the public in a high judicial capacity. It is an honour to The Hindu to have earned his warm appreciation"

Dr Subramania Aiyer in his letter pointed out that "In order to invest our protest with some reality The Hindu which has performed all these years its duty to the country with magnificent courage and consistency should not be left to itself in trying to obtain such remedies as may be available in law in respect of the arbitrary action of the Executive authorities in the matter". He said that the Press Act did not provide for any appeal to the High Court and an appeal would lie only if the security was forfeited. He suggested The Hindu should publish the offending articles again and invite forfeiture of the security. The Hindu should then appeal to the High Court at the cost of the public. He urged that funds for the purpose should be raised.

The Hindu for many days published letters from its readers criticising the Government's action in demanding security and offering to contribute to a public subscription to make up the security amount. One reader wrote. "There need be no further discussion at all and you must at once open a rupee fund so that every one of your subscribers and every one of your readers may show his appreciation of the great services The Hindu has been doing by joining it. You have no right to deny us this privilege and we are under every liability to render this duty". Another reader who sent a rupee towards the security fund said. "Your leading articles are my food and your choice extracts from the home journals are my drink. I cannot afford to lose either, especially in these distressful times".

The Hindu again on June 2, 1919 referred to the action taken against it by the Madras Government and said: "As newspapers are generally promoting the one or the other constitutional agitation, action to curb their activities is often taken in order to strike at the constitutional agitation. . . The action of the Madras Government against The Hindu under the Press Act was avowedly taken in consequence of articles dealing with the situation in the Punjab. If The Hindu has suffered at all — it has not done so, we are glad to say, in the estimation of the public — it has suffered in a cause for the upholding of which Sir Rabindranath Tagore has laid down his knighthood and Sir Sankaran Nair his office as member of the Viceroy's council. We have no hesitation in saying that if the Madras Government's action was capable of being challenged in a court of law it would either not have been taken or it would have been held unsustainable"

A meeting of citizens of Madras held on June 4, 1919 condemned the action of the Government in demanding security from The Hindu and two other Tamil journals and placed on record "its deep and grateful appreciation of the invaluable services The Hindu has rendered to the people and the courageous lead it has given at critical times in the political life of the nation during over 42 years of its existence". It expressed its "conviction that the public confidence

in the policy of *The Hindu* continues undiminished in spite of the arbitrary executive action of the Government against it"

Speaking at the meeting Kasturiranga Iyengar said "I should be unworthy of conducting a nationalist organ of any pretension to independence and public spirit if I had failed to comment upon the Punjab situation"

*The Hindu* chose this as an appropriate occasion to publish extracts from a memorandum submitted to Montagu, Secretary of State for India, and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford during their visit to Madras in 1917 by Kasturiranga Iyengar in which a detailed account was given of the harassment and persecution of the Press by Lord Pentland's administration. The memorandum quoted an interview Kasturiranga had with Gillman, member of the Governor's Executive Council who charged *The Hindu* with not condemning the murder of Ashe, Collector of Tinnevely by a terrorist. Kasturiranga contradicted the statement and pointed out that *The Hindu* had in fact vigorously condemned the crime and the official thereupon withdrew his charge

On June 25, 1919 Kasturiranga Iyengar met the Governor, Lord Willingdon, at Ootacamund on an invitation from the latter. "I saw the Governor by his invitation", he later wrote to his friend, C. Vijayaraghavachariar, "and had a long and frank conversation with him on the security matter" There was however no change in the Government's attitude to *The Hindu*

A. Rangaswami Iyengar in a letter to Kasturiranga on October 17, 1919 said: "I saw (Sir Bhubendranath) Basu yesterday and he categorically denied that Montagu had conveyed to Lord Willingdon any prejudice against you 'Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar is bound to make an impression on anybody he meets', Montagu had said. 'He did make a good one on me'

*The Hindu* wrote extensively on the terrible drama that was enacted in the Punjab by the British regime run mad, the official conspiracy to massacre people to teach them a lesson and the exploits of Sir Michel O'Dwyer and General Dyer, hero of Jallianwalabagh, when the reports of the official (Hunter) Committee and the Congress Committee which enquired into the atrocities were published in March, 1920.

*The Hindu* wrote on March 27, 1920: "In comparison with the Hunter Enquiry, the unofficial enquiry rises to heights of impartiality and thoroughness of investigation that ought to silence cavillers and shame the doubters. It is sober and restrained in tone though terrible in the cold restraint with which it speaks of the most blood curdling atrocities, how restrained can be gauged from the fact that it speaks of Sir Michael O'Dwyer's rule impelled by a policy of pinpricks. If it errs at all, it errs on the side of moderation. Whatever may be the outcome of the Hunter Enquiry whether it serves to contradict or endorse the Congress Committee's, the country will have no difficulty in judging between the two".

Again writing on the Punjab two days later, the paper said: "At a time when the Punjab was passing through the greatest crisis in its history since the Mutiny and needed more than ever the touch of the sympathetic hand it found at the helm of affairs — Sir Michael O'Dwyer. The Punjab since its annexation has been a sort of happy hunting ground for the heaven born. There the Babu ceased from trembling and the niceties of official procedure hampered not the incipient Empire builder. The "Punjab manner" has become to the rest of India — bureaucratic India, of course — an envious aspiration.

A simple martial people, not educated into forgetting the rule and right of the sword, paternal theories of Government inherited from its predecessors, here was a combination dear to the heart of the silent, strong man in whom Anglo-Indian novelists typify the white man's burden. They have made us familiar with all the shibboleths of the school, one must be cruel in order to be kind. If the people in their ignorance did not know what was good for them heroic remedies must be adopted. The bane of their life is education, not the real education which teaches them to sing "God bless the Squire and his relations" but the kind of education which breeds what Kipling in his graphic way calls the "beggar taught", which teaches them ideas above their proper stations. It is the cult of efficiency carried to its logical extremes. Steeped in the highest or in the baser traditions of this school, Sir Michael perhaps exhibits its virtues and its defects in their most complete form. He was efficient, with the efficiency of the physician who concentrates on eliminating the symptoms and driving them underground... when a man is bent on getting things done, quickly and getting them done regardless of the consequences, it may easily be imagined how fierce must be his hatred of the formalities of the procedure, how impatient he must be of criticism and how in the end he could have arrived at a hatred of what he must have considered hampering influences amounting to a positive obsession. That, stripped of excessive verbiage is his conception of the theory of Government... His policy in these fateful years was one long drawn hymn of hate against the educated classes who dared imbibe and worse preach doctrines not conforming to the simple Old Testament theories of the Government of Sir Michael. Sir Michael intended not merely to rule but to govern. He would brook no rival beside the throne, not even an executive councillor to shine in reflected glory... It may be recalled that before the Joint Parliamentary Committee he expressed the opinion that he could not have made the handling of the "rebellion" the shining success that it was had he been obliged to consult colleagues. The war to him was a godsent opportunity of strafing the "beggar-taught" to some purpose".

In a further inquest on the Amritsar happenings, The Hindu wrote on April 7, 1920: "People have hitherto been inclined to regard Sir Michael O'Dwyer as the somewhat unfortunate victim of his excessive zeal and perverse prepossessions. These were grave defects and in their consequences terrible, but there had been no suggestion that the consequences were more than fortuitous. But if the (Enquiry) committee's conclusion is correct Sir Michael deserves to rank with the political criminals of history, with the men who made a wilderness and called it peace... There is no question that in India the authorities are too ready to take extreme measures on the slightest provocation. The sanctity of human life has no application in India. The average official has always the Mutiny in the background of his mind and is always ready to anticipate the worst. In the case of Amritsar it led to events for which by rights the British nation ought to do penance in sack-cloth and ashes before the world for the crimes of its servants. We have no hesitation in asserting that this handing over of the city (Amritsar) to the military as well as the subsequent atrocities, the crawling, the stoppage of water supply, and the crowning atrocity at Jallianwalabagh were all part of a deep laid plan to make an example of the city, to do something that would strike terror into the heart of the Punjab, to teach India a lesson that she should not forget in 50 years... It is therefore

a moral certainty that the police presumably with the knowledge and connivance of Gen. Dyer took steps to make the massacre as successful as possible. They chose the Basakhi Day when an enormous number of people from outside pilgrimaged to Amritsar. That ensured a sufficiency of "rebels" to punish. They deputed one of their tools, a man named Hans Raj, to arrange a prohibited meeting to offer a shadow of excuse for the massacre. He held one on the 11th and announced another for the 13th. Gen. Dyer's prohibitory proclamation was made in the most suspiciously casual manner. It almost appeared to be his wish that as few should know about the prohibition as possible — one of his minor contributions to the success of his tableau. The rest is a matter of common knowledge. The guilt of the ghastly crime of Gen. Dyer must be shared in varying measure by the police, the officials and the head of the province. We are morally certain there was a conspiracy between them to strike terror, to destroy as many lives as possible, that Gen. Dyer was sent out with that definite object, that he and the officials between them set about to entrap as large a concourse of people in a restricted space as could be managed and that a cold blooded massacre was then carried out with all the attendant terrors that the policy of "frightfulness" could suggest. India demands justice for this foul crime and while it may be possible for her to forgive in course of time, she will not and ought not to forget it."

On the Lord Hunter Committee report on the Punjab atrocities, The Hindu's comment was that it was a "whitewash, pure and simple and an apologia for crimes that in other circumstances would have provoked floods of indignation from the very persons, who now attempt to gloss over the most serious breaches of the laws of humanity and civilisation. The Hunter Committee have enunciated a new theory of political jurisprudence, they have formulated a new code of ethics, they have discovered a new standard in the appraisal of massacres. In their eyes every disturbance is a rebellion, every measure is justified that achieves its immediate purpose and every murderer worthy of condonation if his motives are sincere... The Hunter Committee have betrayed a sacred trust at the call of racial fellow feeling in a manner that will provoke the bitterest resentment and indignation throughout the country".

The Hindu's first impression of the Reforms Bill which was introduced in Parliament in June, 1919 was reflected in an editorial on June 18. "The deputations now in England have a very hard task to perform. They should be able to convince the English public that the bill embodies no generous proposals for reform such as are called for by the urgent needs of the situation and that it should be vastly improved before Indians could accord a welcome to it."

The Hindu which issued a special supplement carrying the text of the Reforms Bill, said that "to those who have read the reforms bill carefully and compared it with the proposals in the Report it must have been evident that the reactionary influences of the Government of India have had their desired effect, if not to the fullest degree, at any rate to a disappointingly considerable extent". "The proposals in the Bill", The Hindu said, "constitute a serious departure from the letter as well as the spirit of the Reforms Report, they lean more towards the Government of India's proposals than might at first sight be supposed, they set up a spurious dyarchy which while it lacks almost all the advantages claimed for it in the Report, has all its disadvantages. The fact



is that the attention and energies of the framers of the Reform Bill seem to have been directed more towards providing guarantees against abuse of power by the popular legislature and the Ministers than towards securing to them real powers and under the Bill they have little power and less prospect of getting themselves trained in the art of responsible Government by the responsible exercise of and not by the watching of such exercise of power. A new dyarchy, far more ugly than the old is proposed to be set up in which all those "unifying" forces which the authors of the report congratulated themselves on having provided to prop up the old, have been swept clean. The gulf between the non-official and official sections of the Government and that between the latter and the popular legislature has been subtly widened; the Minister may now as a general rule be kept at arms length by the Governor and the Executive Council and there is to be no standing Committee to scrutinise as well as get themselves trained in the methods of administration"

S Satyamurthi, a member of the Congress deputation to England in connection with the Reforms Bill, sent dispatches from London on the work of the deputation which were prominently featured by *The Hindu*

*The Hindu* highlighted the machinations of European members of the civil service to thwart the reforms as they threatened to affect their security and prospects. It published a report on the formation in Madras of an I.C.S. Officers' Association and the draft of a memorial to be presented to the Government on the proposed reforms. After referring to the material disadvantages to the European members of the services from the proposed reforms, the memorial added: "We would turn for a moment to the increased domestic disabilities which await us. It is the avowed policy of the report to admit to each grade of the various services at least as many Indians as Europeans, the result of which will necessarily be that in many mofussil stations there will be found a solitary English official who for months together will never enjoy the society of a fellow countryman. To the Englishman the conditions will be depressing; for his wife they will almost be unbearable. The suggestion that the ordinary educated Indian will supply the void is so far contrary to the plain facts of experience as to need no refutation. . . . Another change which will bear hardly on the English is in the matter of medical attendance. . . . While allowing that the Indian practitioner often possesses skill we deny that this can take the place of the English doctor and it is a well known fact that Englishwomen as a rule intensely dislike being treated by an Indian".

*The Hindu's* reply to this was. "It seems to us that the time has now arrived when the indenture system under which British skilled labour is imported into India in the form of the I.C.S. should be done away with at an early date. It must however be made clear that in the reconstituted Government the position of every British Executive Officer is nothing more than that of a servant of the public, a mere "pawn" in the administrative system. The members of the civil service have raised a direct issue and thrown a downright challenge to the Government. No Government which has any prestige to maintain can feel any doubt as to the sort of reply which it has to make to this insolent demand".

In the light of political developments subsequent to the Moderates' decision to sever their connections with the Congress, *The Hindu* asked, "would they not have been wiser if they had preserved the united front and thus intensified the force of public opinion? Their strategy has been the strategy of defeat

A truncated scheme, an airy shadow of responsible Government and to balance it, the curtailment of our most elementary civil rights; do the Moderates hold the exchange a fair one? As was said of the Frenchman, the Indian citizen of the future will be the millionth part of a tyrant and the whole of a slave. If the Moderates can contemplate such a situation with equanimity, we despair of them, if they cannot, it is time that steps were taken to re-establish a united front so as to restore its authority to the only force that in our present situation is capable of defending the interests of the country, the force of public opinion".

The dispute between the Moderates and the Congress had a sequel in *The Hindu* chastising the Associated Press of India, the main news agency covering Indian news, for taking sides. "We fear", it wrote, "that the API in India is identifying itself more and more with one section of Indian politicians and endeavouring to puff it up and to decry those who are opposed to it. It is an agency which is employed by journals of all shades of political opinion and it should be its aim to preserve a dispassionate attitude in respect of current events and to report actual events without colouring them with one-sided comments. We have had occasion to notice that this aspect of its duties is lost sight of by the Agency for sometime past as it obtrudes the opinion of some of its agents to the prejudice of those who may hold different views. These remarks do not apply to the Madras Branch as far as we have been able to judge".

The *Hindu* did not spare the API's parent news agency, *Reuter*, either. *Reuter's Agency* had come in for notice at the hands of *The Hindu* in previous years as we have already seen and this time the complaint against it was that it did not cable to India promptly the result of Tilak's defamation case against Sir Valentine Chirol. The *Hindu* extracted the news from a Bombay contemporary whose London Correspondent had cabled that Tilak had lost his case. The *Hindu* said: "The Indian public at any rate is not more interested in, for example things that M. Clemenceau did not say or in the soul stirring fluctuations in the prices of tea and silver than in the fate of this important case. Can *Reuter's* tardiness be a sort of reaction against his excessive activity in regard to matters not vitally interesting to us? Or is the "hidden hand" again, a timorous censor, the last of a noble army of martyrs, apprehensive of rapine or revolution in the country if the news were to be blurted out too suddenly? The matter requires some elucidation. . . Really a hasty man would jump to the conclusion that *Reuter's* method of purveying news leaves something to be desired".

An Indian member of the Madras Legislative Council, B. V. Narasimha Aiyer, (who in later life became a Sanyasi and established the All-India Sai Samaj to spread the teachings of Sai Baba) created a sensation and a problem for the Governor (who presided) when on March 13, 1919 he began speaking in Tamil on the Madras city Municipal Bill. When Lord Pentland, the presiding officer, pulled him up and asked him to speak in English, Narasimha Aiyer said: "I prefer to exercise my right to address in any language". The Governor said the member had always been addressing the House in English and if he wanted to speak in Tamil he had a constitutional remedy. He could bring forward a resolution. If he did not wish to speak in English he would ask him to resume his seat. Narasimha Aiyer said under the existing rules no resolution was necessary. "Under what rule can Your Excellency prevent me from

talking in any language I choose?", he asked "It is a high handed and improper order if I am prevented from exercising my legal rights No power on earth can justly take away from me my right to address the Council in my own mother tongue"

After further arguments and interjections from other members, the Governor ruled that the member must either speak in English or he would be declared out of order. Narasimha Aiyer protested against what he called an "illegal ruling" and saying that he did not propose to speak in any language except Tamil sat down

The incident was referred to by The Hindu which said "We have no doubt that Lord Pentland has added to his list of erroneous rulings as President of the Legislative Council by ruling out of order the Hon B. V. Narasimha Aiyer when the latter desired to address the Council in Tamil. There is nothing in rules or regulations to prevent the honourable member from addressing the Council in his own mother tongue. We congratulate Mr. Narasimha Aiyer on his pluck in endeavouring to introduce the innovation"

**T**HE YEAR 1920 was the year of Non-Co-operation which Gandhiji launched to achieve Swaraj and agitate for the redress of the wrong done to Muslims by the victorious Allies over the Khilafat. The idea of non-co-operation was new to India. It had been practised successfully by Gandhiji in South Africa in fighting the battle of Indian settlers who were denied elementary rights of citizenship.

"It would be idle to deny that the principle of non-co-operation has obtained a firm foothold in the country since it was first put forth by Mr. Gandhi in connection with the Khilafat question", wrote *The Hindu* on July 8, 1920. "It (non-co-operation) seems to us the only legitimate constitutional weapon which a people situated as we are can have recourse to in order to assert our rights and to bring a nation 7000 miles away, which rules over us, and its irresponsible agents in this country to their senses. The policy of non-co-operation, however, is only the means to an end and not the end itself. In our opinion there is no violation of the principle of non-co-operation in nationalists offering themselves for election to the councils and getting themselves returned. They need not go beyond the line of duty which the Irish Nationalists and Sinn Feiners have prescribed for themselves. The elections are the immediate constitutional weapon which we possess to educate the mass of the people as to their rights and duties, to imbue them with a sense of unity and strength and to set them on the high road to the highest political development. It would be a fatuous and mistaken policy for the Nationalists to stand aside from the elections and to give the members of the Moderate party a walk over to their coveted seats in the councils".

In supporting council entry while at the same time pursuing the policy of Non-Co-operation *The Hindu* was doing something which it was to change some years later at the height of the controversy in the Congress between the Swarajists and the No-Changers.

The Editor of the paper clarified his views on Non-Co-operation at a meeting of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee on August 16, 1920. Kasturiranga Iyengar said he did not think for the purpose of Non-Co-operation it was entirely necessary to abstain from the elections. Non-Co-operation could be achieved by entering councils and taking up certain kind of action to show to the Government that the country was entirely with the Nationalists.

He believed that even a moderate form of Non-Co-operation if it was diffused over the whole country on a large scale would bring such a moral pressure on Government as to redress their grievances. He wanted Non-Co-operation in stages and said people must be educated on the programme and how to practise it. He thought surrender of titles if pursued on a large scale would itself have great effect. He opposed boycott of courts and schools.

At the special session of the Congress in Calcutta in September, 1920, Gandhiji's programme of Non-Co-operation was accepted and all amendments to it were rejected. The Hindu, which carried many columns of report of the proceedings did not hide its differences with Gandhiji on his programme, and declared its opposition to certain parts of it in no uncertain terms.

"It is perhaps India's misfortune", The Hindu wrote on September 4, 1920, "than Mr. Gandhi's fault that he should be possessed of a mind so mercilessly logical. Prepared himself for the greatest of sacrifices, it is open to question whether he does not impose on his following conditions the rigour of which is greater than it can bear".

"The strength of a chain is not in its strongest but in its weakest link. That is precisely why we have so often insisted on the necessity for hastening slowly in the matter of non-co-operation, the need for preparing the ground by vigorous propaganda and for making a beginning with steps that are likely to find acceptance by the majority of the people. It is not the Nationalists who have left Mr. Gandhi; it is Mr. Gandhi who has outstripped his panting erstwhile followers. His merciless logic carries him from position to position and as he expounds his scheme one becomes aware of implications that few thinking politicians will agree to consider practicable. First, he was popularly understood to advocate non-co-operation as a means to secure redress for the grievous wrongs of the Punjab and the Khilafat. At this stage the movement was in the nature of a protest. It was to be non-violent and non-coercive. His idea was enthusiastically taken up all over the country. From that position Mr. Gandhi advanced one stage further. His aim was to bring about complete paralysis of the Government. From that to the advocacy of Swaraj and the ending of the British connection was but a step and now we are left wondering whether non-violence is to be a permanent feature of the movement. We are constrained to this doubt by the following passage from his speech in the Congress: 'If I have the choice of the honour of the Punjab and therefore of the honour of India and I have to choose between temporary chaos, anarchy, neglect of literary training of my children, closing up of courts and therefore temporary disorder and shutting out of legislative activity and of the British connection, I will choose the former'.

"Does Mr. Gandhi seriously think the movement will retain its outstanding characteristic of non-violence concurrently with chaos, anarchy and disorder? For our part we do not think the British connection is sacrosanct and have not hesitated to say so. . . . There is no divine right about the British connection. If India is held by the sword it is her right to free herself by the sword. If she is not, she has a right to be treated on a status of equality. When she feels she has not been so treated she is justified in repudiating the British connection. But it is one thing to say, 'we shall not co-operate with you. You may coerce us but you will not get willing service from us till you change your mental angle

of vision' It is an entirely different thing to say: 'We are going to make your existence impossible We are going to be independent of you and to stand by ourselves among the nations of the world' The former represents Mr Gandhi's first attitude and the latter his present one, at any rate it epitomises the views held by the contending parties in the Special Congress . . . If we understand Mr. Gandhi aright he advocates the Sinn Fein's attitude but not its methods. Reprehensible as those methods are, they at least have effected as near as possible an approach to that complete paralysis of Government which Mr. Gandhi hopes to bring about. That has been going on for near a decade and the British Government has not yet surrendered Yet Mr Gandhi expects to sign the terms of a victorious peace in the course of a year. If his calculation is right, there is every possible justification, nay, every need for the most intensive form of non-co-operation. If, as we believe, victory is not a matter of months but of years, then there is every need for caution We advocate a campaign, Mr Gandhi advocates a forlorn hope According to our plan we cannot afford to leave untried and untested every possible means to the end in view We shall not throw the genuine sympathy felt for us by British Labour and other large classes back in their faces for the crimes of their servants Nor shall we neglect opportunities to harass the bureaucracy in deference to false notions of logical consistency or to avoid the charges so freely scattered about of hypocritical self-seeking"

Writing again on September 13, *The Hindu* said that the proposal for boycott of courts and schools was not only "fantastic but positively suicidal We cannot think of a surer way of committing national suicide than to deny the rising generation an education, however imperfect Here it is not merely a question of expediency. It is a question of conviction Thus of the three steps (schools boycott, courts boycott and council boycott) enumerated we condemn one as positively suicidal, the other as impracticable and the third as inadvisable".

What was the attitude of Mr (as he then was) C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer to Non-Co-operation, a reader of *The Hindu* wanted to know after reading a report in *The Hindu* of the Tinnevely Political Conference in which he was stated to have voted against the main resolution regarding non-co-operation while supporting an amendment which said it would become the "duty of the people of the country to adopt a programme of non-co-operation or any other course of action which the Special Congress may approve" Ramaswami Aiyer in a letter to the Editor denied there was any change of front on his part and added that he was opposed to the application of the principle of Non-Co-operation altogether at the present juncture. "It is a pity", he wrote, "that such misleading correspondence should be published even where political opponents are concerned without an attempt at verification". In reply the Editor said in a footnote. "Whatever Mr. Ramaswami Aiyer may have meant to do the ocular evidence of not only of "one who saw" (the anonymous writer of the letter) but of many others including ourselves contradicts his statement as to what he actually did".

C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer was to have many more such brushes with *The Hindu* on more serious matters and violent exchanges extending to the point of withdrawal of official support to the paper when he ruled as the Dewan of Travancore in later years.

Referring to the observation of S Srinivasa Iyengar who presided over the Tinnevely Political Conference, on the attitude of the Moderates, The Hindu wrote: "Much of the recent somewhat acrimonious controversy that has been going on in the Press and on the platform in the country may be easily explained as being due to a failure on the part of some of our countrymen as well as that of the Government to appreciate and respect the changed political outlook. These are not the days for amiable, sweet-tongued politicians who in the past, if they failed to secure comfortable berths might at any rate be sure of the applause of an unwary public. We have now, as Mr Srinivasa Iyengar points out, 'a race of practical idealists' unmindful of official frown or official favours, a race composed of men who are public workers by deliberate intent and not those whom necessity has compelled them to become such. Do the Government and those who, as Mr Srinivasa Iyengar points out, are for "co-operation at all costs" recognise this fact, the rapid coming into existence of a spiritualised Democracy in the country? We have no evidence to show that they recognise it. The Reform Act, which is a characteristic compromise between strong, overbearing bureaucrats and vacillating and, as events have shown, indifferent democrats, is throughout more suspicious than generous. Hence the meagre powers granted to us under the measure. . . The Government's attitude to democracy in India is not merely one of indifference as their Reforms Act indicates. It is in a sense even hostile. In no other way is it possible to explain their policy of rallying the Moderates. This handful of our countrymen (Moderates) seek to discredit the Congress, the greatest and most democratic organisation in the country now that they are no longer able to boss it. . . . If the Reforms Act is to prove a democratic measure it must be worked by Democrats, by Congressmen, men who will always treat its resolutions with respect and as binding on them and not only when they suit them".

The Hindu had some harsh comments to make of the Moderate conference which met in the first week of January, 1920. Referring to an appeal by Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer The Hindu said: "We shall still criticise and we shall not, as Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer asks us to do, put ourselves in his place, for only constant criticism can keep the official up to the mark, to respect not only his duty to himself but his duty to others. We have referred to the fatuities of this Moderate Conference, its sickening self-laudation, its sugary flattery and its no less unpleasant self-abasement only to contrast it with the firmness, dignity and moderation of the Congress. The latter's loyalty to the King-Emperor was no less marked but its appreciation of the message was more exact and more acceptable because more sincere. Disraeli, an inimitable master of the art, once said that most people can be flattered but when it comes to Royalty you must lay it on with a trowel. The President of the Moderate Conference laid it on with an extra large sized one. Certainly the Moderates Conference has justified itself, for in its sheer ineptitude it has displayed to outsiders the fatuity of its claim to represent the better mind of India and the impudent absurdity of its libel on the Congress as a mob of excitable lashed to fury by demagogues. The thinking man can decide which of the two displayed more dignity, moderation and self-restraint in distinctly trying circumstances".

The Hindu followed up this with another in February. "The history of the Moderates since their definite secession from the Congress exhibits a singular bankruptcy in principles of political action and it is no wonder that from the

loudly proclaimed "better mind of India", the Moderate Party should now have declined into an appendage of officialdom, a sort of snappers-up of unconsidered trifles such as the bureaucracy in its infinite mercy may let fall.

The Moderates may not convince the people, they can always find a cosy corner in the bosom of the bureaucracy."

V S Srinivasa Sastri hit The Hindu headlines and also its editorial columns in August, 1920, when the paper published two letters from Tanjore quoting Sastri as having said at a Tanjore meeting that the creed of Congressmen and nationalists was bombthrowing. "We are not surprised", The Hindu said, "that a person who makes such envenomed, reckless and untrue aspersions has to be guarded by a number of police constables, a police inspector and a magistrate when he has to deliver a lecture as was actually the case at Kumbakonam, his own native place. Mr Srinivasa Sastri sometime ago repudiated with much warmth the epithet, "official apologist" which was applied to him in these columns. (This is what The Hindu wrote: "One who is habitually by temperament or otherwise an official apologist cannot be a democrat"). He wrote to point out 'In controversy it is a common trick to fling an odious epithet at your adversary. Lampoonists and other reputation killers know that it will stick even when the victim has completely vindicated himself. Such is the power of a witty or sharp pointed phrase. It is good to remember this for you and me and the public as well'.

"Did Mr Sastri remember his own sage remarks when he stated that bombthrowing forms part of the nationalists' programme? We should have deemed such a vile and scandalous statement as proceeding from any responsible person as incredible but for the fact that it is vouched for by reliable correspondents".

The subject cropped up again when The Hindu referred to an apology written by Sastri from Trichinopoly on August 5. Sastri wrote: "What I said about nationalists in my Tamil speech at Tanjore on July 31 was that some of them went to the length of defending the use of bombs as necessary for our political salvation in present conditions. This carried a grievous imputation and I am sorry I was betrayed into making it. I expressed regret the moment it was pointed out to me which was after the meeting dispersed. It is a pity I was not interrupted when I made the unjust criticism as I was interrupted at several other points. Else I should have unhesitatingly apologised there and then".

The Hindu "The above letter speaks for itself. We have no desire to harp on the subject in view of Mr Sastri's unconditional apology but we wish to point out that such slips of the tongue by one who has the reputation of being in the counsels of the hierarchy of Government officials are apt to have more serious consequences than the indiscretion of less responsible persons. When the air is thick with rumours of repression a statement like Mr. Sastri's or anything approaching it, conveyed to the authorities may make all the difference between sober restraint and panicky repression in the policy of the Government in these explosive days".

The Hindu described the British House of Lords as "that monument of privileged incompetence", when the Lords censured the Government for the handling of the General Dyer case as "unjust" to him. "We have been bowing the knee in the temples of strange Gods too long. We have been content too long to be mendicants, accepting with servile gratitude doles from our



birthright. The only God at whose shrine we have not worshipped is the only true God, the God of national self-respect. With mind cleared of the mephitic frame of cant and hypocrisy it is India's duty to declare if her self-respect demands it that she will not be frightened of the bogeys of disloyalty or be hypnotised into eternal gratitude by the benefits of British connection. She has no room for a community which is prepared not only to justify but to acclaim lapses into the most primitive and inhuman savagery in order to secure its foothold on the country. So much she owes to her self-respect and we can only hope that the men whose patriotism flames into eloquence at the sight of our country's wrongs will not let their resentment burn itself out in sound and fury signifying nothing. India must make it unmistakably clear to the British nation that she has been wounded to the heart by the manner in which the question has been handled. We speak not for this party or that but for every Indian who is not ashamed of the land of his birth when we say that the revelation of British mentality has come as a bitter shock to us. We are in a better position to gauge the depth of feeling that has been aroused than the hysterical Englishwomen who prate about "loyal millions". We assert that the loyal millions will soon be counted in their thousands and in their tens. "

Replying to an appeal by Lord Sinha, the Indian Under-Secretary of State for India, that the Amritsar controversy should be dropped, *The Hindu* wrote: "It is beyond doubt, however, that so far as the vast majority of the controversialists are concerned there is no inclination to listen to an appeal which is so ridiculously premature. The reason is perfectly simple. The question is not one of party only. It affects the self-respect of our land and until that self-respect has been vindicated to cry halt would be an act of deepest treachery to the country. In no considered utterance of those entitled to speak for her rulers has India been treated with that sympathy which alone can assuage the bitterness of wrongs scored into her heart. The official utterances have been half-hearted, apologetic and inclined to condonation. One Correspondent suggested that as Indian agitators were able to upset "settled facts" so Europeans should be able by keeping up their agitation to reverse the decision against Dyer. People who hold this opinion forget that when that day comes, as heaven forbid it should ever come, more things will be upset than the decision against Dyer. When the day comes the proverbial loyalty of India will have changed its direction and the British connection will have become a bitter memory. . . How can there be peace when we do not know whether we have won or lost? If we have won let that be made clear by deeds and not by words which might mean anything or nothing. If we have lost then obviously there can be no cessation, no halting by the wayside till India's honour and self-respect are vindicated" .

A national calamity in 1920 was the passing away of B. G. Tilak on July 31 in Bombay. *The Hindu* announced the news in the Leader Page with a two column picture of the great nationalist. It printed tributes from all over the country and a report of the funeral procession and the cremation in the Chowpatti sands for the first time in living memory. "In all Indian hearts", *The Hindu* wrote, "which contain a spark of patriotism and a glimmering of the truth in regard to the fallen fortunes of India, the death of its most valiant champion in whom was symbolised all that was best and greatest of India's past culture and greatness and the rich fulfilment of its glorious future, must

cause a heart wrench of no common kind . . . Mr. Tilak's was a name to conjure with throughout India, where friends and foes alike bore testimony to the enormous influence and the magnetism and strength of his personality. Those who remember the ovations he invariably received wherever he went cannot but be convinced that his was an empire of the heart, that the feelings of affection and reverence with which he was universally regarded were no ephemeral phrases, no transient emotions, but embedded deep in the hearts of his countrymen . . . There have been strong men before Agamemnon. There have been persons on whom the stupidity of an official has conferred an easy and not too inconvenient martyrdom. These have flashed into popularity, heroes of an hour and then sunk into well-deserved obscurity. Mr Tilak's position rested on no such insecure foundations. Of persecution he had his fill. But while persecution may make martyrs it cannot make leaders and certainly not leaders with the unquestioned authority that Mr Tilak could claim . . . Mr. Tilak has always stood far beyond the faintest breath of suspicion as to his motives. He survived both praise and blame. Officialdom pursued him with a vendetta the bitterness of which passed description. That too he survived because no amount of persecution could break his unflinching spirit. He emerged from each ordeal with the flame of patriotism burning the brighter . . . As was once said of Napoleon, Mr. Tilak was not so much a man as an idea and the idea of lofty patriotism and noble self-sacrifice he represented will under providence endure".

Paying a tribute to Tilak at a citizens meeting in Madras Kasturiranga Iyengar recalled that Mrs. Besant had bracketed him (Mr. Iyengar) with Tilak and called them a "real menace to India". "I felt gratified by this statement", he said, "because it was an honour to me to be coupled with Mr. Tilak though it was meant in a deprecatory sense . . . Mr. Tilak, it is true, was a menace to India's servitude, to the exploitation of India by foreigners, whether in the political, religious or commercial fields, . . . He was a man of transparent simplicity and rectitude of character. He worked for no personal ends and he had absolute faith and trust in God".

The Hindu continued to report cases of racial discrimination in which sometimes high officials were involved. Such a one was that of G. H. Jackson, I.C.S. who was charged by a telegraph messenger boy with beating him with a cane and acquitted by the District Magistrate of Tanjore, also an Englishman, in July 1920. The telegraph boy in his complaint said Jackson who was riding collided with the cycle on which he was going on the road and beat him with a cane. He explained that at the time of the collision he had to cross to the wrong side of the road being forced to do so by two horse carriages (jutkas) dashing along opposite to him. The District Magistrate not only disbelieved the complainant and acquitted Jackson, but ordered the telegraph messenger to pay Rs.50 to Jackson as compensation.

The Hindu commented: "When we remember that Mr. Jackson had produced not a single witness to support the story and that the prosecution was supported by four eye-witnesses, including persons present on the scene of accident and such respectable persons as the Telegraph Sub-Inspector who, though a telegraph official, is as a third party, more reliable than the accused himself, we do not know why exceptional credence should be attached to the words of a European official against all the fundamental rules of evidence to be

observed in a case under trial. It must be said that in disposing of this case the magistrate had throughout the mentality of gross official, if not of racial, prejudice far removed from the even handedness of an impartial judge. What strikes us as even more unjust than the discharge of the accused is the order of compensation to him from the complainant's purse. It is like adding insult to injury. Everybody must admit that, obviously, the latter after suffering injuries had a strong *prima facie* case against Mr. Jackson and the magistrate has gone both against law and humanity in his final stroke."

A reader after criticising the magistrate's judgment and the need to vindicate British justice as between man and man without regard for caste, colour or nationality concluded his letter thus. "May I ask if the gentleman of the name of Jackson was not implicated in an assault or an alleged assault on a little boy sometime ago for wishing him Good-Morning in, as the Gentleman thought, an impertinent way? There was also if I recollect correctly an old story of an old Indian who was taken to an European official's bungalow and made to perform a humiliating obeisance, for, as the man said, clearing his throat and spitting into the street, when the *Dorai* passed by, without the remotest intention of insulting the latter? What was that Gentleman's name?"

The readers' column of The Hindu was always productive of interesting human stories and disclosures of official lapses. But very few could have expected to learn about the debts of a ruling Prince and how he serviced them. In June, 1920 the paper published the following from some of the "suffering creditors" of the Nawab of Banganapalle (in modern Andhra Pradesh).

"Ever since the present Nawab assumed the reins of Government of the small state of Banganapalle he has been assiduously borrowing not only from his subjects but also from the people of the neighbouring (British) taluqs. His debts now amount to more than Rs. 2 or 3 lakhs. His creditors gave him the money as it was represented to them that the money was needed for charitable purposes and for war contributions and for the use of the State and that the State and private funds of the Nawab would be the security for due payment of his debts. But now all on a sudden a circular is issued by the Dewan of the State which says that the Government of Madras have permitted His Highness to pay a small portion of his debts from the funds of the State and the creditors are asked to take very small amounts in full satisfaction of their dues. Thus a creditor who has advanced Rs. 30,000 is offered only Rs. 2,000 or nearly an anna in the rupee and a letter is sent to him that if he does not accept this he would get nothing. Dear Editor, can you please find out the principle if any underlying this action of the Madras Government in allowing such an arrangement?"

And there was the angry reader who was surprised he did not get a proper reply when he wrote to the Superintendent of the Madras Widows Home asking if he could marry any of the inmates. "I ask", he wrote to the Editor, "why at all the Widows Home (on the Marina, Madras) should be maintained. I was all along under the delusion that the girls in this Home are open for remarriage and to enjoy the fruits of married life. A few days back I penned a letter to the Superintendent of the Home requesting him to let me know as to whether there were girls whose parents are prepared to get them married on giving the bridegroom dowry to prosecute his studies further. My first object in writing to

the Superintendent about this was to minimise the number in the Home and to influence my friends who are at one with me in this line, to cement alliances with such innocent girls. The Superintendent of the Home wrote to me thus: 'In reply to your letter I regret I am unable to help you in the matter'. May I therefore request the parents of such innocent girls to take this opportunity of getting the girls married to bachelors in the college classes who desire help through marriage to prosecute their studies further."

Three days later another reader replying to him said "The Widows Home is not a marriage contracting agency. There are no girls with money to marry students of the college classes. It is a place where widows are fed, sheltered and educated. It is resorted to with the intention of finding consolation in education. As such there is every reason for the Widows Home being maintained".

A train was on fire, endangering the lives of many women and children and this was how a reader reported it to *The Hindu* (note his mildest of censure of the railway authorities) "The train from Dharmavaram to Pakala being unusually crowded on the night of March 27 (1920), a number of the passengers, men, women and children, had been crowded into the C 1 Van which prior to this had been loaded with kerosene tins and straw. As the train steamed into the station the van took fire but the passengers rushed out to the platform and escaped though some of them got bruised in the scramble. It is hoped that the railway authorities will be more considerate to passengers".

We may now have a look at the make-up of *The Hindu* in 1920. The daily issue invariably was of 12 pages and this was how it was broken up: First page carried short advertisements and the following page display advertisements. District news from its own correspondents were featured on page three and page four was the leader page where also space was found for foreign telegrams. Indian telegrams, city stories and notes appeared on page 5 and legal reports on page six. Over three columns were given to letters to Editor on page seven and articles and extracts from periodicals were printed on page eight. The rest of the pages carried advertisements. There were weekly news letters from the state capitals like Calcutta, Delhi and Hyderabad and plenty of space was given to news about Congress work and activities by Congressmen.

There was the practice of taking editorial notice of officials who had retired and saying a good word about them as in this instance: "Dr N. Subramania Aiyer, M.A., M.B., and C.M., Senior Dewan Peishkar and District Magistrate, Trivandrum has retired after a long and distinguished service of nearly 32 years. We are glad that he intends to settle down in Madras and to devote his time to public work".

Full publicity was given to memorials, representations, public meetings and announcement of religious, social and political functions. A report of a conference of sanitary inspectors of Madras Presidency at Tiruchi covered over two columns as also a report of the proceedings of the Coonoor Municipal Council which reproduced verbatim the exchanges between the chairman and some of the councillors.

Not much attempt was made as already indicated to "tamper" with foreign cables or to use discretion and discrimination in using them. It would have required agility and much general knowledge on the part of the average reader to wade through them. Here are some samples. On the Leader page under the

heading, "Lady Gomer", was a Reuter cable from London: "Lady Gomer has given birth to a son". On the same page in another column under the heading "In England": "The body of Lord Lichfield has been found in a river near his Staffordshire residence with a gun shot in the head". Another Reuter story with the heading: Lord Sinha: "With reference to a newspaper statement that Lord Sinha will succeed Lord Ronaldshay it is announced that there is no question of Lord Ronaldshay retiring at present"

C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, who wrote on music and reviewed concerts for *The Hindu* for many years with distinction and a reputation that survived long after his death reviewed his first major concert by gatecrashing into a private music party arranged to celebrate a marriage in July 1920. The concert was of Palladam Sanjeeva Rao (flute) accompanied on the violin by Karur Chinnaswami Aiyer and on the mridangam by Mailatoor Krishna Aiyer. Srinivasa Iyengar wrote he gatecrashed into the concert because "the party was too good to be missed. So satisfied my social conscience by the fact that sweet music is meant for all that love it and needs no invitation. I went there not as a friend or acquaintance of the host but as a reporter to whom all hospitable doors are open and last but not least the very performers gave me a pressing and cordial invitation and few of the guests present there could boast of such an honour. All this to show that a real lover of good music need not have any qualms, social or otherwise, about attending any function public or private"

Writing about the concert (which he did in three columns) he said: "The noise was deafening and the disturbance insufferable but the performers practically isolated themselves from the surroundings and centred themselves in their art and we, its lovers and votaries followed them close into the sacred precincts where the higher mysteries were celebrated"

As a tailpiece to this chapter let us present this classic rebuke to the Associated Press of India by *The Hindu* on May 15, 1920: "The Associated Press sends us the following under date May 14, under the heading Ootacamund news: 'Mr. A. W. Lushington C.I.E., District Forest Officer, Vizagapatam, died at Waltair on March 25, 1920'. When news bureaux wake up like that, a silly season is certainly not void of sensation".

# Pet Lamb of the British Government

25

**A**S THE NAGPUR session of the Indian National Congress in January, 1921 adopted the compromise resolution on Non Co-operation moved by C R Das and accepted by Gandhiji (the resolution modified certain aspects of the original non-co-operation programme), The Hindu hailed it as "a notable landmark in the annals of the Congress movement in this country beside which party organisations such as the Moderate conference which met in this city under the grandiloquent name of the National Liberal Federation are like a rush light before the blazing sun".

The Hindu added: "The keynote of the remarkable success of the last Congress and of the tremendous enthusiasm which has marked its proceedings is the union of hearts which has been consummated among nationalists of all shades of opinion and their inflexible determination to throw themselves heart and soul into the national movement and to leave no stone unturned in striving by all legitimate and peaceful means to attain the national goal, namely, Swaraj".

The Hindu criticised the attitude of the Moderates who were saying that the Congress was dead. "So far from the Congress being dead or 'fast losing its hold over the country', the truer reading of the lesson of Nagpur would be that it has found its soul, even if it has lost the respect of the Moderates, whose allegiance now appears to be divided between the bureaucracy and the new councils. Mr. Montagu hoped that the bureaucracy would be liberalised. In the result one feels that the Liberals have become officialised. Macaulay somewhere mentions a slow poison which Indian rulers used to administer to potentially dangerous subjects. That slow poison has been at work in this country too long, involving a melancholy procession of 'lost leaders' who left their comrades for a handful of gold or a riband. This creeping paralysis has been definitely arrested and the body politic purified by the Congress refusal to wear the badge of eternal servitude. It at last reflects the soul of the nation, the spirit of self-assertion that is abroad and of which the Non-Co-operation movement is the expression. It is not without significance that while the Congress "demands", the Liberal Federation "urges", "requests", "recommends" and "considers" The latter indicates a mentality essentially servile and if to repudiate that mentality is a disservice then the country can easily put up with a few more such disservices. . . Moderatism is not a policy but a

disease. How else is one to explain the fact that men whose criticism of official shortcomings is as vigorous as that of anybody, still cherish a pathetic belief in those same official promises and smooth words?"

The Hindu said. "The challenge has gone forth and a programme has been adopted which is more comprehensive and which in our opinion is nonetheless effective because it is more diffused"

When the Government of Lord Reading unleashed a policy of repression to put down the Non-Co-operation Movement and filled the jails with satyagrahis, The Hindu sympathised with the Moderates for the dilemma in which they found themselves. "We hope", The Hindu wrote in February, 1922, "Our moderate friends will not misunderstand us if we venture to sympathise with their present sorrows. A freehold between the upper and the nether millstones is not the most desirable of habitations and that is or till lately, was the delectable position they occupy. Strong as has been their opposition to the Gandhi movement they feel as a party that the activities of the Government have taken a turn which they feel to be not only unnecessary but positively mischievous. They have in consequence felt bound to enter an emphatic protest against the indiscriminate round up of leaders, the frivolously launched prosecutions which are filling the jails to overflowing. They felt that such a policy was misdirected because it was really no remedy for non-co-operation but on the other hand an incitement to greater effort. That they were right in this conclusion was seen in the unflagging enthusiasm with which repression was received all over the country. Unfortunately for their comfort they are also under contract to exhibit their fitness for self-government to the satisfaction of the British Parliament or what in this case comes to the same thing, the bureaucracy in India. They are now called upon to deliver the goods. The bureaucracy says to them in effect: Prove your fitness for self-government by supporting law and order without which any government is impossible. . . Unenviable as their position has hitherto been between their patriotic instincts and the terms of their bond with the bureaucracy, now that the issues have been narrowed down and stripped of side issues like law and order, they will if the Government of India persists in the attitude defined by Lord Reading find themselves between the devil and the deep sea"

The Hindu charged the Moderates, especially, Srinivasa Sastri and Sir C. Sankaran Nair with giving a handle to the Diehard Press in England to incite public opinion in England against India. It wrote on March 13, 1922: "It is a matter for shame and humiliation that in their task of inciting public opinion in England against India the Diehard Press should receive invaluable help from men like Sir Sankaran Nair and Mr. Sastri — men who have achieved or been thrust into positions of importance and who if not exactly prophets in their own country, at least pose as representative Indians. Their misrepresentations have considerably reinforced the prejudice against India and given irresistible force to the cry for 'strong measures' "

The Hindu reserved some of its most virulent attacks for Srinivasa Sastri, spokesman for the Moderates, whom it described as the "pet lamb of the British Government, with that genius for accommodation which has brought him so many laurels and threatens so many more" Commenting on the nomination of Sastri as India's delegate to the Imperial Conference in March, 1921 The Hindu wrote: "These men (moderates) who shout out from the house

tops their sorrow at the development of strange methods of agitation are rapidly developing into most useful assets for the bureaucracy in times of tribulation. In awkward situations its distress is always alleviated by the sight of Mr. Sastri standing by in "shining armour" and Mr. Sastri whatever other achievements he may place to his credit can always claim the proud title of succourer of bureaucracy in distress, a title not the chance offspring of an isolated instance but one tested and proven time and again. That its interests should be safest in the hands of such a man in the coming Imperial Conference naturally goes without saying. It was said of the Austrians that they had a genius for defeat. It may be said with equal justice of Mr. Sastri that he has a genius for surrender and this is the man who is nowhere less honoured than in his own presidency, who is entrusted with a task that might well tax the resource of the ablest, most determined and most patriotic of Indian statesmen. And yet that he will create a good impression upon his colleagues is as certain as that India will have to pay for his personal triumphs. Surrenders are not always unprofitable. It is necessary for public opinion to make itself felt with no uncertain voice and demonstrate that Mr. Sastri, repudiated in Madras by the Non-Brahmins and by the vast mass of public opinion here and elsewhere, is the nominee of the bureaucracy and represents nobody but himself on that august body."

The Hindu had Sastri in its bonnet and would not leave him alone. It went at him again hammer and tongs in June, 1922 when he was in Australia on an official mission. It wrote on June 13: "Mr. Sastri, it is well known, is an exponent of the simple life. In fact he told an Australian audience with impressive unction all about the ideals of service and simplicity and sacrifice of the society of which he is the head (the reference is to the Servants of India Society of which Mr. Sastri was the head). The audience was doubtless interested and vastly impressed but may have for a fleeting moment wondered what all that had to do with Mr. Sastri's immediate task. It is not improbable that there is a connection between that side excursion and certain statements by Mr. Bomanji in Bombay sometime ago which amounted in some to an assertion that Mr. Sastri, doubtless in the best interests of his country, managed amid his arduous labours on the Imperial Conference to have a good time of it. The charge was perhaps ungenerous, but if one manages to combine business with pleasure one should not be unduly insistent on the weight of the burden he shoulders. We are aware that Mr. Sastri had a position to keep up and had to sacrifice some of his cherished ideals in the interests of that position. It is possible to extend the same excuse in the case of his present mission but if it is true as a Ceylon paper asserts, that his sense of what is befitting an Indian ambassador runs to the extent of engaging an English valet, we are constrained to utter a mild protest. A man with his nice sense of diplomacy ought to have known that the sturdy independence of the Australian would revolt at the idea of an Englishman performing menial services for an Indian and that to that extent his precious mission is endangered. The story is symbolic of the nature of Mr. Sastri's mission. A statesman might usefully compute the number of banquets and speeches that have occurred in the whole episode of the mission both here and in Australia and then compare it with the results actually accomplished. He will then find that the valet idea is not so far beside the mark as he might have been at first blush inclined to think".



The valet story reappeared in *The Hindu* a few days later via the *Calcutta Englishman* which wrote: "Some extremist journals are making merry over the fact that Mr Sastri was accompanied to Australia by a valet from the Carlton Hotel. It appears however that Mr Sastri pays his valet out of his own pocket. So if he chooses to have such a valet — why not! We wonder, however, what the Australian Labour Party thinks of it".

The *Hindu's* comment "For our own part, however, we do not wonder. It is indeed a stroke of Mr Sastri's shrewdness. It is in fact a practical demonstration of Mr Sastri's belief in a white Australia policy. Had he taken a brown valet, who knows Australian labour would not have struck work as an infringement of its trade union rules and thus made it impossible for Mr. Sastri even to land? Knowing as he did that while Australia was dead against the competition of coloured labour and approving of the white's ideal, Mr Sastri had no option but to refuse to be a party to importing coloured labour into Australia. That perhaps explains at once the selection of a white valet and Australian labour's silence".

The *Hindu* accused Sastri of accepting the White Australia Policy and telling the Australians so. "Now we do not suppose", The *Hindu* wrote, "Mr. Sastri really believes in the White Australia Policy. In fact we have reason to believe from certain dark hints he has let fall on sundry occasions that while duly anxious not to shock Australian prejudices too much, he almost and in a manner of speaking feared that the policy might not be all that it was cracked up to be. But then as he assured his audience India had no desire to question that policy so long as Australia had the faintest shadow of belief in it. She was content to wait outside and pray for a change of heart. Mr Sastri, of course, was not too insistent on the change of heart for it is annoying to have oneself prayed at and as an adept in the art of putting salt on the bird's tail, Mr Sastri was taking no risks. In his incurably diplomatic determination to look only at the bright side of things he was even almost if not quite prepared to accept the White Australia Policy as a kind of honour done to India. While Mr. Sastri in his capacity of plenipotentiary thus insists politely but inflexibly on the total and unconditional surrender of his own position, it is not by any means certain that opinion in Australia is as unanimous on the question of the policy as Mr. Sastri evidently thinks".

The *Hindu* then quoted an Australian businessman as saying in an interview that the White Australia Policy would prevent cheap labour being allowed into Australia and the capturing of Indian markets. His view was that the policy "will not pay". The *Hindu* said. "The question naturally arises whether Australia is to be permitted to take advantage of India's markets while persisting in a policy which definitely places the brand of inferiority upon the great majority of the human race. And herein appears the great disservice which Mr. Sastri has rendered India, in his "accepting" if not gratefully at least uncomplainingly, that policy and thus precluding us from employing any of those methods of coercion or persuasion which may later come to our hands when we assume the full control of our fiscal relations. But there is the consolation that public opinion has not been slow to expose Mr Sastri's pretensions to speak on behalf of India and no validity can be attached to the infamous bargain by which Mr Sastri would barter India's birthright for a mess of pottage".

Here we have to take temporary leave of Sastri to go back to the main political developments in 1921. Sastri was very much in The Hindu's system and as we shall see he sometimes received bouquets also

On June 2, 1921, the new Viceroy, Lord Reading made a political speech which The Hindu welcomed as a significant contribution to the "literature of peace". His Excellency, who had met Gandhiji some days earlier, spoke at the Chelmsford Club in Simla even as the Non Co-operation movement was in full blast and Government's repressive policy in full swing. The Viceroy said that the fundamental principle of British rule in India was that "there can be no trace and must be no trace of racial inequality". He added "No one can study the problems of India without realising at the outset that there is some suspicion and perhaps at the present moment some misunderstanding between us. I say that there cannot be and must never be humiliation under British rule of any Indian because he is an Indian and I would add one further proposition which I believe is as true as either of those I have given utterance and which found support from you that we British people in India and those also in our own country must realise that we have much suspicion to disperse, many misunderstandings to banish from among us and that in truth the essence to my mind of co-operation between us and Indians is that we should convince them by our own actions which will accord with our thoughts and intentions that we honestly and sincerely mean what we said with regard to India"

"H. E. Lord Reading made an important contribution to the literature of peace", wrote The Hindu, "in his speech at the Chelmsford Club dinner. We say literature of peace advisedly for the speech while couched in a vein that indicates a sincere desire for peace does not yet give any hint of the Viceroy having grasped the causes of the present discontent or of having made up his mind as to a definite policy of abating them"

The Hindu said: "There will be a feeling of disappointment that his first considered speech after he had an opportunity of hearing all sides should have indicated no definite move towards peace. All over the country the policy of repression is in full swing. The criminal procedure code is being put to uses that must make its authors turn in their graves. Verbal ebullitions are punished with a merciless severity which seems to establish a new principle of jurisprudence that political offences are of a greater turpitude than those otherwise motivated. Monstrous sentences similar in character to those which once moved the generous indignation of Lord Morley are being passed and law and order preserved or their breaches punished by executive methods which in more than one case called for severe reprobation. It is true that in this repression campaign the Government have the open or tacit support of the Moderate party. But there are other directions in which reform has been demanded even by Moderates and in which the Government fears to take a plunge with a tepid policy".

The Hindu went on: "We appreciate His Excellency's motive but must warn him against mistaking trifles for essentials. Racial inequality in spite of protestations always will exist when one race imposes its rule on another. The ultimate sanction of all such rule is force camouflage it how you will; and till that tutelage is abrogated whether voluntarily or otherwise, racial inequalities with their attendant exacerbations must always continue. What is His Excellency's remedy for a disease which is not of the surface but organic?

Echo answers, what? We are not unmindful of the importance of creating an atmosphere favourable to peace To that end Lord Reading's speech is an important contribution"

In the event both Lord Reading's speech and The Hindu's appeal failed in their purpose and events in the country marched on to their destined end. The arrests of prominent leaders of the Non-Co-operation movement continued. Mahomed Ali, Congress and Khilafat leader, was arrested in Waltair and his brother, Shaukat Ali and Dr. Kitchlew of Punjab were arrested and removed to Karachi. Gandhiji made a trip to Madras in September, 1921 when he explained the significance of the non-co-operation pledge to vast audiences. It was in the midst of this tense situation that the Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VIII) arrived in Bombay on November 17, 1921 and the Congress called for a hartal and boycott of the visit

The Hindu which on an earlier occasion when another Prince of Wales visited the country had joined the Government in appealing to the people to give him a royal welcome explained why it could not do so on the present occasion

"In other circumstances", it wrote, "India might have accorded to the Prince the welcome due to his position in the empire But the conditions obtaining in India at present are such that the great national organisations have felt themselves obliged to refuse to participate in any manner in the various official functions and receptions arranged in connection with the visit. According to the rigid conventions of a constitutional monarchy such as obtains in Britain, the public movements of royal personages, especially those of the King and the heir apparent are directed by the political head of the country—the Premier—and they are directed towards attaining some political objective There is no reason whatsoever to think such an objective does not lurk in the present visit".

The Hindu referred to Srinivasa Sastri's plea against boycott of the visit and said: "Mr Srinivasa Sastri's specious plea that the people of India should show scrupulous deference to the susceptibilities of the people of Great Britain and the Dominions, his reference to the mischievous propaganda of and insidious weapon in the hands of Non Co-operators and his injunction that political discontents should be forgotten now, only reveal the mentality of the man. They are too puerile to be considered for such a pose is unworthy of any self-respecting nation If, as is professed, the visit has no political significance then the time chosen for it is the most inopportune possible. The country is seething with discontent and is in no mood to welcome the Prince. There is widespread economic distress and in parts of more than one province famine conditions prevail. Will any patriot with any sense of responsibility agree at this juncture to spend lakhs of money on empty entertainments? And yet the various Governments faced though they be with bankruptcy have budgetted large sums of money... official stage management might do all it can in making the visit a success by parading the gilded gentry and the host of officials that are to be found everywhere. Public opinion in the country will consider it a gross betrayal of the country's interests if, with the memories of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs still remaining green and the country mocked with the costly camouflage of reforms, we should choose to disregard the mandate of the Congress. The attitude of the Congress and the country

towards the functions arranged in connection with His Royal Highness' visit does not in the least betoken any discourtesy or disrespect to the Prince and of course it is absolutely no part of loyalty to share in such functions"

The Prince of Wales' visit to Bombay was marked by an outbreak of riots which followed after a meeting addressed by Gandhiji and a bonfire of foreign cloth. An unruly mob stopped cars and carriages, molested Europeans and those in European costume. There were bonfires of foreign cloth at every street corner into which the hats collected from Europeans and Indians by force were thrown in. Gandhiji and Khilafat workers rushed to the riot areas and persuaded the crowds not to indulge in violence but often they could not get a hearing. Military were called out and they patrolled the riot areas. The hartal observed on the same day in Calcutta, Madras and other cities was complete.

Gandhiji in a statement on the riots said. "The reputation of Bombay, the hope of my dreams, was being stained yesterday, even while in my simplicity I was congratulating the citizens upon their non-violence in the face of grave provocations" Gandhiji said: "The Prince's visit itself and the circumstances attending, the ceremonials arranged and the public money wasted for the manufacture of a welcome to H. R. H. constituted an unbearable provocation. And yet Bombay has remained self-restrained. This, I thought, was a matter for congratulation. The burning of the pile of foreign cloth was an eloquent counter-demonstration to the interested official demonstration"

Gandhiji then described the hooliganism and acts of violence of the mob, consisting mostly of mill hands, and said that the hope of reviving mass civil disobedience had once more been dashed to pieces. As a penance for what happened in Bombay he said he proposed to observe every Monday a 24-hour fast till Swaraj was obtained.

More Congress leaders were arrested in December and they included Maulana Azad, C. R. Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai. Announcing the arrests in a special supplement, *The Hindu* wrote: "Today's telegrams show that Lord Reading's Government is fast nearing the goal of its repressive campaign which is nothing less than the suppression of the Indian national movement and the extinguishment of the Indian National Congress. The arrest of C. R. Das, President-elect of the forthcoming National Congress — a session which was expected to be the most memorable and critical one in our awakened national life — is the coping stone in the series of criminal prosecutions, convictions and imprisonments which the leaders of the Congress and Khilafat organisations have been subjected to during the last three or four months. Various Congress and Khilafat speakers have been convicted throughout the country for working in the national cause. The punitive and preventive provisions of the criminal law have been unscrupulously resorted to stifle freedom of speech or writing. Since the landing in India of the Prince of Wales the repressive campaign has taken a more virulent turn. If there is any instance in history of trying to make the country a desert in point of nationalistic activity and calling it peace, the present is a notable one. It is a novel way of affording welcome to the Prince of Wales and creating a calm atmosphere by clapping in jail and gagging the mouths of all those who are not inclined to join the "welcome" demonstrations. The policy of Lord Reading's Government is however calculated to make more than a surface

exhibition of the people's loyalty and servility. It would, if acquiesced in by the majority of the thinking portion of the Indian public inflict a mortal wound on their national aspirations and the attainment of the goal of Swaraj for the country. . . No matter to what particular school of political thought a man may belong, it must be realised that the Congress is the great national organisation which is bound to ensure for us our political freedom. . . There cannot be any longer any possibility of doubt as to the nature of the struggle, nor can there be any doubt as to on which side every patriotic son of India ought to cast in his lot".

Referring again to Lord Reading Government's 'headstrong career of insensate repression', The Hindu wrote on December 13, 1921 "The most sinister aspect of the present campaign is that it is directed not against non co-operation as such or against the civil disobedience movement. It lays the axe at the root of such elementary rights of the subject as freedom of opinion, speech, writing and of association subject to the ordinary laws of the land. It was clearly stated by Sir Harcourt Butler in the U P Legislative Council the other day that the measures were necessitated by the Prince's visit. What a reversal of the ordinary procedure this! Royal visits are usually signalled by acts of amnesty, clemency and gifts to the people but here in India it is signalled by gagging whole provinces and the wholesale clapping of popular leaders into jail. To interfere with the freedom of speech and opinion is the worst form of tyranny possible and every Indian whatever his politics, ought to stand up and effectively protest against the infringement of his much valued right".

The Hindu said "It is time the country realised that it cannot without acquiescing in a dangerously reactionary course calculated to do away with the freedom of opinion of the subject tolerate the present methods of suppressing the Congress pursued by Lord Reading. Leaders of other shades of political opinion than that of the Congress and indeed political opponents of the great national organisation, will do well to reflect that what befalls the Congress today may easily fall to their lot tomorrow".

It was in an atmosphere of tension and with a new spirit of patriotic fervour that the Congress met in Ahmedabad in December, 1921. The special correspondent of The Hindu wrote: "The session of the Congress which met here on December 27 amidst unique and critical circumstances marked the beginning of a new era in the Congress history. For the first time in its 36 years of life the Congress truly became Indian and national alike in form and spirit. The appreciation by delegates and visitors of the entirely indigenous methods of arrangements makes it highly probable that this precedent will be followed in the future. The Reception Committee having taken considerable care to exclude every form of alienism, the assembly with all its members dressed, without any noticeable exception in pure Khaddar and crowned with the Gandhi cap, looked wholly Indian in appearance. The whole scene was a striking demonstration of the hold of the Swadeshi spirit on the hearts of the Congressmen. Grim determination to win Swaraj at the cost of any suffering and sacrifice could almost be read in the face and person of most delegates and leaders present".

The Hindu was happy about the change portrayed by its correspondent: "The spirit that now animates the Congress is clearly depicted in our Special

Correspondent's message. It is one of service to the motherland, service in undertaking which considerations of sacrifice would enter but little. The Khadi robes in which the assembled delegates and visitors dressed themselves were, if they looked a bit penitential, truly symbolic of the country's frame of mind today. It is not an attitude of contempt for other modes of dress and habit that was revealed in this tribute to the swadeshi creed though we dare say there will be many who, purely to suit their purposes, see in this only hostile and mischievous designs on others, as much detrimental to the Indian people at large as to the others. Rather it marks as any external symbolism can a grim determination on the part of the people "to see the whole thing through", to do, that is, whatever is required to redeem the country's honour and to safeguard the vital interests of our ancient and great nation".

Meanwhile as the date of the Prince of Wales' visit to Madras neared, frantic efforts were made by the Governor, Lord Willingdon, with the help of the Justice Party to prevent a hartal and intimidate shop-keepers and others into offering a welcome to the Prince.

The Hindu denounced these efforts and said "The public will refuse to be bamboozled as it has already refused to be terrorised into the kind of loyalty the bureaucracy wants". The paper referring to the Governor's appeal to good manners and courtesy said. "But when a guest however exalted his claims for welcome is forced upon a nation at a time of acute political crisis, it is no derogation either from courtesy or manners to make it plain that his visit is ill-timed. When in order to cover up its initial mistake the bureaucracy embarks on a kind of rake's progress and proceeds from one absurdity to another, each complicating the situation further and plunging it deeper into the morass of muddle, which is the natural habitat of all bureaucracies, then the time has come when the nation shall declare that it is time this elaborate farce should come to an end. The issue is plain. The bureaucracy wants to force its own meretricious conception of loyalty down our throat. We have our own conception of loyalty, a loyalty consistent with national self-respect and are not to be frightened into accepting any distorted versions in exchange for the genuine article. The Government is perfectly welcome to vindicate Indian traditions of hospitality by putting every politician of importance with hundreds of followers into prison but it cannot in the name of all that is decent ask India to believe that her national honour has been thereby preserved untarnished. To offer the choice between prison and a simulated hospitality is a queer way of serving India and the bureaucracy is and intends to remain master in our house".

Referring to the role of the Justice Party, The Hindu said: "Unlike our opponents we concede their perfect right to employ all the art of eloquence and persuasion to achieve their objects. But does it lie in the mouths of men who clap men into prison to provide a welcome to the Prince, men who wink at all the arbitrary tyranny of minor police and other officials, men who employ methods such as we have condemned, to talk of "terrorism" by volunteers? Can hypocrisy go further? The issue is simple. It is not as falsely sought to be made out, one of welcoming the prince or not. It is whether the Congress or the bureaucracy is to prevail. The Justice Party, true to its instincts, has made its choice, and sided with the bureaucracy and shines in the reflected glory of

that proud association. Will Madras be behind in repudiating that unholy alliance?"

The Hindu was not disappointed in its trust and confidence in the people of Madras. On January 15, 1922, Madras city, "in obedience to the Congress mandate" observed the "completest hartal" in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales. The Hindu featured the story with these headings: "The great hartal. A complete success. Isolated disturbances". The report of the hartal said: "All the important markets in all quarters of the city, municipal as well as private declared a hartal in spite of all sorts of official pressure and threats of punishment. Isolated disturbances, most serious of which were in Georgetown, Mount Road and Triplicane, attributed to a collision between the Adidraida and "loyalist" mischief makers on the one side and some hooligans on the other, occurred but their spread was averted by the careful, courageous and cool behaviour of the police and the peaceful persuasion of the national volunteers. But for these untoward incidents the city was quite peaceful and has now engaged itself in its usual business as though nothing happened. Madras has risen to the occasion and proved its loyalty to the Congress".

The Hindu gave equal prominence to the engagements of the Prince in the city and published the report on the same page as it carried the report of the hartal. Its report of the reception to the Prince said: "H. R. H. the Prince of Wales landed at the harbour at 8.30 on Friday morning and received a vociferous reception at the hands of officials of the Presidency and a large conscript crowd. Leaving the harbour the Prince drove in state to the Government House along Mount Road on a portion of both sides of which there was a fairly large organised gathering of spectators. The day's functions included visits to the Legislative Council and the Senate House and a garden party at Guindy. The public of Madras, however, in a manner exceeding all expectations, declared a complete hartal of which an account appears elsewhere". The Hindu which noted that the hartal was observed with "remarkable thoroughness" regretted the minor disturbances and said: "On the whole we feel entitled to congratulate the promoters of the non-co-operation movement in the city on their signal success". The Hindu's comment on the Prince's visit was: "If the visit of the Prince to this land needs a memorial, on it will be writ large the words: 'He came, he saw and he went'".

The Hindu reproduced some days later the report of the Manchester Guardian Correspondent to his paper on the Prince's visit. "It must be admitted", the Correspondent said "That India breathed a sigh of relief when the Renown steamed out of Karachi harbour. The visit in spite of many brilliant and impressive moments and frequent outbursts of enthusiastic loyalty was far from being an unqualified success. It inevitably took the form of a duel between the two most popular men in India and unfortunately loyalty to the one was incompatible with discipleship of the other. The pitch was queered for the Prince before he set foot in India and all the pluck with which he has played an uphill and losing game could not avail to balance too heavy a handicap. On the day the Prince sailed from Karachi, 10,000 angry and self-righteous men were lying in prison because of his coming and will presently emerge from jail with their ancient hate fed by a recent souring personal experience. They will come out of prison confirmed in the principle of disobedience to the state... yet in spite of his speeches and of the enthusiasm which the Prince has called forth

from all with whom he has come in personal contact it would be blinking facts to pretend that the visit has been a success politically. It has played into the hands of the disaffected party who will always associate the policy of repression now in force with the desire to safeguard the Prince."

Sir C. Sankaran Nair briefly appeared on the political scene and parted company with *The Hindu* (of which he was one of the purchasers along with Kasturiranga Iyengar) when he clashed with Gandhiji, at the Bombay Conference of leaders in January, 1922. The Conference was aimed at bringing about an understanding between the Government and the Congress. Sir Sankaran Nair who presided over the Conference resigned his office as he said he could not continue to lead the deliberations since Mr. Gandhi wanted to humiliate the Government before the opening of the round table conference (suggested by the leaders) and was insisting on "impossible conditions". Gandhiji who addressed the conference listed his minimum demands as release of Khilafat and political prisoners, and that the R T C should discuss a scheme for Dominion status for India. He said he would not suspend preparations for civil disobedience while talks were going on for a settlement. *The Hindu* published a letter written by Sir Sankaran Nair to *The Times of India* in which he said he had come to the conclusion that "any further conference with Mr. Gandhi and his followers is useless and that he (Gandhi) will not be a party to what I consider an honourable settlement or that any settlement will be faithfully carried out". Sir Sankaran Nair referred to Gandhiji's statement that preparations for civil disobedience would continue and said, "Those statements disclose a state of mind which would render any conference nugatory of any satisfactory results. They will not justify us in approaching Government in association with Mr. Gandhi and his followers for holding a conference. Mr. Gandhi does not want a conference or a settlement except on his own impossible terms".

*The Hindu* wondered that Sir Sankaran Nair should have agreed to preside over the conference holding the views as he did regarding Mr. Gandhi and the non-co-operation movement, "views which exceed in bitterness and intensity the most violent opinions held by the bureaucracy and the hostile press". *The Hindu* felt that Sir Sankaran Nair had erred in accepting the position, the duties attaching to which he grossly misconceived, "and has injured the public cause by the manner in which he has vented his feelings and prejudices. In any case the long tirade against Mahatma Gandhi and his followers which Sir Sankaran Nair has thought fit on this occasion to give expression to was utterly uncalled for and unjust. It was as a member of the Indian nationalist party that he was called upon to take part in the proceedings of the Conference. It is clear that by his action and his pronouncements justifying it he arrogated to himself the functions of the Government which is the other party to the conference. Under the circumstances the prospect of a round table conference being convened and the present struggle between the people and the Government approaching a solution seems very remote".

*The Hindu* in another editorial on January 31, 1922 said: "We understand from sources which we believe to be authoritative that the Government of India are not likely to accede to the proposals for a Round Table Conference". The paper said in view of this it did not propose to publish letters on the subject including one from C. R. Reddi who was a prominent delegate at the Bombay



Conference "We are afraid", The Hindu said, "Mr. Reddi is over optimistic of the Government's intentions for our own information is that the Government of India's estimate of the conference, that is, of himself and his associates, is that they have become the dupes of Mr. Gandhi".

That The Hindu was correct in its estimate of the Government's attitude was seen in the latter's reply to Gandhiji when he in a letter to the Viceroy explained why he proposed to start a No-tax Campaign in Bardoli (Gujarat). Gandhiji said he would suspend the movement if the Viceroy accepted the Bombay Conference demand for a round table conference and release of political prisoners. The Government's reply was to reiterate their determination to deal with the civil disobedience movement according to law and maintain order.

Criticising the Government's policy, The Hindu said: "Mr. Gandhi has with a frankness which is an expression of the higher political morality laid his cards upon the table. He is not blind to the risks and dangers. He is therefore anxious for peace, not peace at any price but peace with honour. If the struggle is forced upon him he will have a terrible choice to make between surrendering all that he has long fought for and embarking upon a struggle which might take a turn repugnant to the basic principle of the movement. The Government of India has yet to explain why it forces that struggle upon him and his followers. If it were as anxious for peace as it professes to be, if it wishes to convert the present unhappy and admittedly dangerous antagonism into one of harmony and co-operation, if it is not prepared indifferently to contemplate the possibility of widespread disorder, is it not its duty to explore all avenues of peace and to convince moderate elements that repression is the sole remedy"? The editorial ended with these words. "If the country must pass through the flaming furnace it will not shrink from the ordeal fortified in the consciousness that it will emerge from it like a giant refreshed".

But the Chauri Chaura incident came to the Government's rescue and Gandhiji called off the freedom battle. At Chauri Chaura, a small town near Gorakhpur in the then United Provinces a mob attacked a police station on February 11, 1922 and burnt alive a number of policemen. The Congress Working Committee meeting at Bardoli suspended the civil disobedience movement including the Bardoli no-tax campaign.

The Hindu was happy with the Working Committee's decision which it called wise. "To those", it wrote, "who like ourselves had serious misgivings as to the wisdom of embarking on civil disobedience at the present time the decision of the Congress Working Committee to suspend the programme of offensive non-co-operation will come as a great relief. The horrible affair at Gorakhpur has shown that the necessary atmosphere of non-violence without which mass disobedience is fraught with terrible results is emphatically not present in some parts of the country". The Hindu pointed out that "the decision implies the suspension of all offensive activities, thus going beyond Mr. Gandhi's offer in connection with the abortive conference proposals. It is no longer open to Congressmen to disobey laws however iniquitous. To suffer in patience is part of the penance imposed on the country for its irresponsiveness to the call of absolute non-violence".

The Hindu announced the arrest of Gandhiji in Ahmedabad on March 10, 1922 in a banner heading. It said the arrest was made on a charge of sedition.

by the Bombay Government with the concurrence of the Government of India. In a message to the nation on the eve of his arrest Gandhiji said "If I am arrested I look to you and all who are out to keep absolute peace. It will be the best honour that the country can do me. Nothing would pain me more in whatever jail I may find myself than to be informed by my custodians that a single head has been broken by or on behalf of non-co-operators, a single man had been insulted or a single building damaged. If the people or the workers have at all understood my message they will keep exemplary peace"

Only a few days earlier, the Secretary of State Montagu had resigned and The Times had said it meant that the Government of India would now arrest Gandhiji.

The Hindu said, "Considering that in these days one need not commit any specific offence to be arrested we need not be too curious concerning the particular section or sections which the Mahatma may be supposed to have infringed. His arrest may therefore be regarded as a sop to cerberus. The Times had demanded it and what The Times wants it, under the masterly direction of Lord Northcliffe, knows how to get". The Hindu pointed out that if the real uneasiness of the Government was due to the possibility of widespread disturbances then "Mr. Gandhi free is a greater asset to them than Mr. Gandhi in Jail. If in spite of these considerations they decided to arrest Mr. Gandhi it must have been on grounds quite other than a breach of the law or a possible disturbance of the peace. The response of the country to the challenge must be clear and unmistakable. That there will be unbounded resentment at the action goes without saying but what must be insisted on is that resentment should translate itself to a strengthening of our purpose and not waste itself in futile violence. As the Mahatma has time and again insisted to resort to violence is to play the Government's game. . . . If for a time the Mahatma cannot be with us in the flesh it behoves us to prove by calm, sustained and steadfast effort that he abides with us in the spirit".

The Hindu published a special supplement on a Sunday evening (March 19, 1922) to announce from its Special Correspondent at Ahmedabad that Gandhiji was sentenced to six years simple imprisonment by the Session Judge, Mr. Bromfield, who wrote himself into history by telling the Mahatma, "It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen you are a great patriot and great leader — even those who differ from you in politics look up to you as a man of high ideals and leading a noble and even saintly life. I have to deal with you in one character only. It is not my duty and I do not presume to, judge or to criticise you in any other character. It is my duty to judge you as a man subject to law, who by his own admission broke the law and committed what to ordinary men must appear to be grave offences against the state. . . . If the course of events in India should make it possible to reduce the period (of sentence) and release you no one will be better pleased than I".

The Hindu in a moving comment wrote: "It was perhaps in the fitness of things that the culminating point in the divorce between law and justice should be reached in the trial and conviction of India's greatest man. It is difficult to read unmoved the account of this unforgettable trial, recalling as it does another "trial" in which another great man suffered for the redemption of humanity. It certainly is a grim tragedy that the earlier sacrifice should have

been so vain as to make the later one possible. It is the duty and privilege of every patriotic Indian to see to it that this fresh crucifixion shall not pass into the limbo of futile martyrdoms”.

The Hindu described the sentence of six years as “savage” and said the judge was guided by “political consideration in the determination of sentence” It added “We need not conceal from ourselves that the incarceration of Mr Gandhi is a severe blow to the movement His wise guidance and popularity are assets it will not be easy to replace We have this consolation however, that it is a far severer blow to the Government It will rally Indian opinion as nothing else can” K P.Kesava Menon wrote to The Hindu on March 25, 1922, describing a visit to the Ahmedabad Central Jail where Gandhiji was lodged “Ten minutes’ walk from the prison gate brought us to the place where Mahatmaji was”, he said. “It was a secluded part separated from the rest of the prison, perfectly clean and absolutely quiet. There was a row of buildings with wide verandahs and a beautiful lawn in front Two rooms in that building were set apart for Mahatmaji and his fellow prisoner Sri (Shankarlal) Banker We walked in, entered the compound and got upon the verandah.

“Hush”, said Mrs Sarojini Naidu, “He is sleeping”. Yes, he was sleeping. Resting his weary head on a Khadi pillow there he lay on a Khadi sheet enjoying sound sleep as if he were in his own ashram The jailer walked slowly and stealthily lest he should wake the mighty prisoner The visitors hesitated to proceed further, fearing they might disturb Mahatmaji The very flies buzzing near the jail verandah seemed instinctively to adjust their movements without disturbing his peaceful slumber He woke up, opened his eyes, saw the host of friends and followers around him and with that radiant toothless smile so familiar to those who have come into contact with him, welcomed us and made us sit on his Khadi bed One would have thought Mahatmaji was entertaining his friends in his own place There were a few books lying here and there The inevitable spinning wheel, his mute companion in freedom and confinement was of course by his side He looked round and had something to say to everybody He looked healthy and cheerful He talked and laughed with all the unrestrained joy of a school boy beginning to enjoy his holidays. Palace or prison, freedom or confinement, company or solitude, it is all the same to this noble soul who thinks, says, acts and lives in the presence of his maker. Standing by his side and looking at his hopeful face we felt that we nearly ceased to be slumbering slaves, that our spirit increased, our liberty was not far off and Swaraj was coming quite close. We felt ourselves encouraged, ennobled and elevated in his presence”

When C. Rajagopalachari met Gandhiji at the Yerawada prison (where he had been removed) on April 2, 1922 he found he was being treated as a common prisoner and that he had lost weight. Rajaji told a reporter that during the interview Gandhiji was standing all the time while the Superintendent was in his chair. “The fine words uttered by the judge at the famous trial at Ahmedabad had led us all to hope that the Government of Bombay would treat the great prisoner if not exactly as he deserved or as we would want, at least as civilised Governments would treat their more important prisoners of war”. Rajaji added “Our interview however rudely awakened us to the realities of the British Indian administration”

Rajaji, so to say, was the custodian of the Congress affairs in Madras. He ran a regular column in *The Hindu* under the heading "Congress notes" and the main burden of his theme was to strengthen the Congress by enlisting more members and to make collections for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. Here is a sample of his appeal for contributions to the Tilak Swaraj Fund: "By giving you lose money but you gain priceless purification and strength. Round the necks of our womenfolk hangs idly many a jewel with which we can buy our motherland's freedom. I wish these columns were read by our women as much as by our men. Men's hearts have become stone, our women are yet unconquered in spirit and would give it if but permitted or reached."

An official victim of the Non-Co-operation movement in 1922 was V. V. Jogiah Pantulu, father of V. V. Giri, former President of India. *The Hindu* on April 24 published a copy of a letter written by Jogiah to the Chief Secretary of the Madras Government resigning his posts of Government pleader and Public Prosecutor in Ganjam following the Government's disapproval of his son, Giri, a non-co-operator, staying with him. In his letter Jogiah made it clear that he had differed from his son in regard to the non-co-operation movement and had failed to persuade him not to join the movement and they both agreed to differ. He added: "It would not be out of place to state here frankly that for the Government to ask those who are officially connected with it to discard social relations with their non-co-operator friends and relatives or to chuck out their sons and other blood relations from their houses is to impose on them not only a very unreasonable but an impossible condition. There are many officials in Government service who honestly differ from the non-co-operation movement but who have depending on them sons and other relations who conscientiously feel that they should be non-co-operators. It would be most unnatural and against the long cherished Indian sentiment to ask a honest, loyal and law abiding public servant to send out of his home those near and dear to him, merely for the reason that the latter differed in their political views with the father. I do not at all think that such social relations with non-co-operators or the wearing of home spun cloth, that is, Khaddar, will interfere in any way with the due and faithful discharge of one's responsibilities to the State." *The Hindu* printed the letter with these headings: "For his son's sins. Mr. Jogiah Pantulu's resignation. Letter to Government".

During the closing months of 1921 a much grimmer version of the "Black Hole of Calcutta" was enacted on a train which carried Moplah riots prisoners. The Moplahs in Malabar, who are Muslims, went on a rampage, burning and killing not only British officials against whom their wrath was originally turned but also Hindu landlords, women and children and ending up as a fanatical religious movement which killed and plundered people who would not embrace Islam.

*The Hindu* got into trouble with the Government over the publication of reports of the riots. A Government communique criticised *The Hindu* for publishing unverified reports and reminded it of its letter to the Press that the Chief Secretary to Government was available to give the latest news regarding the riots which could be used to correct or clarify correspondent's reports. *The Hindu* said in reply it welcomed the suggestion and sent its reporter to the

Chief Secretary But the reporter could meet only the Under-Secretary who referred him to the Government communique which, The Hindu said, failed to clarify many things and said nothing at all about the casualties.

The Hindu said "We submit therefore that in this new co-operation between the Press and the Government in order to bring an intolerable situation to an end as soon as possible, there is something lacking in heartiness on the part of the Government We may be wrong but we feel that an attempt is being made to put the Press in blinkers and we do not propose to submit ourselves to that operation Putting it bluntly, the public have no confidence in official accounts and to ask us to refuse publication to others unless they have the imprimatur of departmentalised truth is asking us to betray our responsibility to the public"

The Hindu published exhaustive reports of the riots and military operations from its correspondents, eye-witnesses and the Associated Press of India

Writing on the "Rebellion" on September 7, 1921, The Hindu said. "It has now been made painfully clear that the Moplahs have been guilty of unthinkable excesses, of arson, looting, murder and, worse, forced conversions of the Hindus They may plead provocation in respect of their attacks on Government property—a plea which would carry no weight with non co-operators as well as the general public—but they have absolutely no excuse for having laid violent hands on their non-Muslim brethren, Europeans included, to such an extent as they have done The mad acts of violence they have been guilty of were incredible in their brutality but unfortunately making all allowances for exaggeration, they have been reported to be true Any attempt made to palliate or condone these acts would constitute an irreparable blow to Hindu-Muslim unity—shattered as it has probably been so far as Malabar is concerned Our profound sympathies must now go to the non-Muslim population of Malabar and the measure of earnestness with which our Muslim brethren join in this expression of sympathy will be the measure of strength of Hindu-Muslim unity"

On October 18, 1921, The Hindu printed what it said might be the rebel view contained in a letter addressed to The Hindu and purporting to be written by the Moplah rebel leader, Variambunnath Kunahmed Haji from his hilly hide-out at Pandalur. In the letter which was in crude, characteristic Moplah Malayalam, the rebel leader denied that the Hindus had been forcibly converted and alleged conversions were done by "Government party and Reserve policemen in mufti mingling themselves with the rebels (masquerading as rebels)"

The train tragedy to which reference was made at the beginning of this story occurred on November 21, 1921 and it was discovered at Podanur railway junction (near Coimbatore). The Coimbatore Correspondent sent the following report The early hours of the morning at Podanur junction were the scene of a tragic accident which recalled to one's mind the dark days of the "Black Hole" When No 77 passenger train from Calicut to Madras reached Podanur station carrying a closed iron wagon with prisoners numbering 100 from Tirur bound for Bellary camp, it was discovered when the trap door was opened that a number of prisoners were lying dead in the carriage, while a few others were in an unconscious condition. The seriousness of the occurrence was then realised and though it was a little after midnight, available outside help was

sought and they were removed from the wagon along with the dead. The railway medical officer appeared on the scene and the patients were attended to with the scanty supply of materials and available appliances. It was found on close examination that 56 out of 100 were dead due beyond doubt to asphyxiation. These 56 corpses were left at Podanur and later consigned to the former destination (Tirur). As regards the remaining 44 the only safe course possible in the circumstances was to carry them to Coimbatore as the prisoners needed instantaneous and efficient medical aid. By about 6 a.m. they were brought to Coimbatore. Through some of the passengers who happened to be eye-witnesses at Podanur the matter was widely known to the public and the news spread like wild fire. Before 7 a.m. the station yard and the platform on all sides were filled with spectators." The Correspondent added that two more prisoners died after admission to hospital. (A Government communique said eight died after admission to hospital bringing the total dead to 66).

The Hindu said news of the tragedy would be received with great indignation all over the country. "That more than 60 men should be allowed to die of asphyxiation and that in the present cold season, betrays a callous disregard of human life on the part of those responsible for the "packing" arrangements. The only parallel we can think of to this horrible incident is that of "Black Hole" of Calcutta. That of course passed into history, we mean history as written by European historians for Indian edification".

With the capture of Kunahmed Haji, the leader of the Moplah "rebellion" in January, 1922, the trouble in Malabar came to an end and The Hindu wrote: "No patriotic Indian, be he a Muslim or a Hindu would refuse to extend his sympathy to the sufferers of the blind fury of Moplah despair and ignorance in Malabar. Nor can the memories of this cruelly sad episode be wiped out from the mind of Malabar till the active co-operation of Hindus and Muslims is able to assure the people of Malabar that they have seen the last of the like troubles. Not in minimising Moplah misdeeds nor in seeking to bring about measures which would only breed further misdeeds lies the future peace and prosperity of Malabar. It is futile to ignore — and we do not ignore — the terrible sufferings of the Hindus but we dare say Hindu Malabar is yet magnanimous enough to forgive the events of the last few months. It now devolves on our leaders, Muslims no less than Hindus, stoutly to set their face against mutual recrimination and steadily set themselves to work so that the root causes which made the rebellion not only possible but also so fruitful of savage atrocities might be wholly eradicated".

The Hindu reported the death of a great patriot and bard of freedom, Subramania Bharati, who was an ardent and frequent contributor to its columns since the days of G. Subramania Aiyer, on September 11, 1921 in its editorial columns. "We regret to learn", it wrote, "of the death of Vara Kavi Subramania Bharati at his residence in Triplicane last night. The deceased was an ardent nationalist, a great thinker, a stirring speaker and a powerful writer. He is the author of a number of Tamil works including "National songs". His recitation of his national songs infused genuine patriotism in the hearts of his listeners. He like many other patriots of India was an exile in Pondicherry for some years because his patriotic speeches did not please the Gods in power. By his premature death the country has lost a born poet and a sincere patriot".

The Hindu carried a tribute to Bharatī from S Satyamurthi. "Had he been born in England", he wrote, "he would have been the poet laureate and been adored by his race. Had he been born in any free country he would have risen to such heights of eminence that he would have lived longer and enriched his language and race more than he was able to do here. Had he been borne even in Bengal he would have been a Rabindranath Tagore. Those who know his poems will know I am indulging in no exaggeration. But born in India and in Tamil India Subramania Bharatī had to spend the best part of an all too short life an exile from those who were near and dear to him. No wonder that he pined and suffered and has gone to a premature grave. So long however as the Tamil language lives and there is a spark of patriotism in Tamil India, Subramania Bharatī's songs will live"

The Hindu broke all precedent when it paid a tribute to one of its reporters who was killed in a train accident in April, 1921. The reporter, T. Doraiswami Iyengar, was on his way back from Bezwada (as Vijayawada was known then) where he covered the All-India Congress Committee session. The Hindu wrote he was "just over 26 and as a reporter in our office revealed abilities far above his age. Full of enterprise, full of energy, ever on the search for news and never fatigued in its pursuit, he achieved more than one journalistic coup. His zeal often took him out of sheer delight in the profession to duties beyond the purely reporting line. He accompanied the Editor of this paper to England. He was our Special Correspondent for the Congress sessions at Calcutta and Nagpur and other important conferences. He endeared himself to all as easily as he performed duties with pleasure and the members of our staff feel in his death a personal loss"

Here is the story of an exclusive article commissioned by The Hindu and published by it which by a strange combination of circumstances came to be published some days later by its rival in the city. But let The Hindu itself tell it: "If Addison were living now he would have found migrations of a newspaper article as delightful a subject as the adventures of a shilling. The one, like the other has in modern times a limitless range for travel and has often a trick of self-recommendation which helps to take it from one hand to another with perfect ease. This paper, for example, had recently an article specially written for it by Mr. St Nihal Singh on "India's artificial status". A few days afterwards we saw it comfortably laid out on the pages of a Bombay contemporary. Yet a day or two and the same wayward thing was in the columns of the *Swarajya*, a little shaded with the travel but entirely innocent of the thought that it found light first in this paper. After all good things stand well anywhere and it is superfluous always to refer to their source".

# Battle for and against Council Entry

26

**T**HE PRIME MINISTER of Great Britain, Lloyd George, put his foot into it when he made an indiscreet speech on India in the House of Commons in August 1922 and raised a storm of controversy. Lloyd George said Britain would never give up India and assured the British members of the I.C.S. of their permanent role in India. He said "We have invited the co-operation of the people of India in the discharge of this trust. We have invited them in increasing numbers and perhaps in increasing proportions. I think that was inevitable. It was a natural development we have invited them on the bench, we have invited them in the civil service and we have invited them to assist in the Government of India under their own people now in the legislature. That was an inevitable evolution but I want to make it clear, if it is not already clear, that that is not in order to lead up to the final relinquishment of our trust but with a view to bringing into partnership in discharge of that trust within the British Empire. To discharge that great trust it is essential to have the aid of Indian civil servants, Indian soldiers, Indian judges and Indian legislatures. But it is vital that we should have the continued assistance of British officials".

"To people who know the conditions in India", wrote *The Hindu*, "the abysmal ignorance he (Lloyd George) displays of the real inwardness of the Indian situation is only rivalled by the pompous absurdity with which he assumes the God and affects to dispose of the destinies of this great country. That destiny will be accomplished elsewhere than in a House seeking ways and means of defaulting from thoughtlessly over generous commitments and by other hands than those of a Welsh solicitor. . . . when his eloquence has had some time to cool, Mr. Lloyd George might usefully reflect to whom he was doing a service by his ridiculous exhibition. India has no need to be told what Britain's intentions are. If and when she finds it necessary she will decide for herself whether partnership with Britain is good for her. She will never accept the principle of tutelage and if Britain through the mouths of foolish counselors insists on it then so much the worse for her. Mr. Lloyd George likes plain speaking especially when he is to do the speaking. One good turn deserves another and his candid confession of faith makes it only fair that it should meet with a similar candid response from India. India must make it clear that her future is her own concern, not Mr. Lloyd George's nor Britain's. The latter may do a good deal to help, something to hinder but can in no way prevent the



onward march of the inevitable. In the helping as in the hindering she will be well advised to keep in mind the necessary repercussion on her own interests and if she is wishful to conserve those interests she cannot do better than maintain a lethal chamber for inconceivably silly babblers of the Premier's type".

Mrs Sarojini Naidu told a reporter in Bombay. "Never has David Lloyd George's amazing gift of indiscretion done greater disservice to his country than now when unwittingly in a single reckless sentence he has so completely betrayed in all its naked arrogance the deep-rooted conviction at the heart of the whole British race as to the inherent inferiority of the Indian people and British inalienable right to dominate India for all time. To the insolence of such a challenge there can be but one reply — Swaraj securely based on Indian unity and sustained worthily on power, courage and wisdom to guide aright our own destiny, to guard our own frontiers, frame our own laws, form our own alliances, sign our own treaties and fulfil our equal duties and responsibilities in a commonwealth of independent nations"

When Montagu, Secretary of State for India, resigned shortly before Gandhiji's arrest *The Hindu* wrote an estimate of him which will amplify its remarks on Lloyd George's speech. *The Hindu* said "Our quarrel with Mr Montagu is not with what he did but with what he left undone. Whatever may be our own opinion of his achievements we do not blame him for doing so much but for not having done more. His fault was that with the best of intentions, if professions are the index of intentions, he was not able to rise superior to circumstances. His speech on the Mesopotamian report debate roused expectations that were most grievously disappointed by the Montford scheme. We asked for bread and when procrastination here whetted the edge of hunger he gave us a stone. It may be that more it was not within his capacity to give but the fact remains and the man that characterised the bureaucracy as 'too wooden, too iron, too antediluvian' left it not much less wooden or iron or antediluvian. Nor has his handling of the Punjab episode been characterised by that bold determination which one would have expected of a champion of India. For long months he kept the British public and according to his own assertions, himself in the dark regarding events which were stirring India to her profoundest depths. Then when the country had been well nigh driven to the verge of desperation came a belated commission and on top of its report a despatch which was an incongruous mixture of lofty profession and pusillanimous action. And long after it became clear that the despatch had missed fire he persisted in playing possum ignoring the gathering forces of indignation in India with a pathetic confidence that once the reforms were in full swing the situation would somehow magically settle itself down".

With Gandhiji in prison the Congress was faced with the question of what it should do. Should it revive the Civil Disobedience movement or enter the legislatures under the new reforms? A committee which went into this question and which consisted among others of C. Rajagopalachari, V. J. Patel and Kasturiranga Iyengar presented a divided report. While the committee unanimously suggested that the Provincial Congress Committees be empowered to start limited mass civil disobedience on their own responsibility, it was equally divided on the suggestion that council entry be permitted as a means to wreck the reforms from within. Those who were for council entry were Ajmal Khan,

Motilal Nehru and V J Patel, while those who insisted the council boycott should continue were C Rajagopalachariar, Kasturiranga lyengar and Dr M A. Ansari

The Hindu was totally opposed to council entry and it had made its views clear even before the release of the C D Enquiry Committee's report. In fact its disillusionment with the councils formed under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms may be said to have started with their inauguration by the Duke of Connaught in 1921. Writing in January of that year, The Hindu said "It was not self-Government that was inaugurated this morning His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught's speech itself points out with painful plainness that it is but a beginning or rather a sounding of the people of India as to their fitness for 'orderly progress towards constitutional liberty'. The more carefully you read H R. H's speech the more are you impressed with the deliberate emphasis it lays on stages and tutelage with the suggestion that the goal is yet distant, beyond and behind the horizon and the journey long and arduous"

The Hindu said, "India feels she is not less fit for self-government today than is Australia or New Zealand or South Africa or Canada. She repudiates the theory underlying the Reform Act that she is to be on prolonged probation and earn a certificate of proficiency before she is to be granted self-Government"

Again in October, 1922, The Hindu referred to the Congress declaration that it would have nothing to do with the Reforms Act and said the boycott of the councils was the only "legitimate result" of that attitude. "How would the proposal", it asked, "to enter the councils to offer total obstruction and attempt to wreck the reforms advance the national cause? We consider it to be neither morally right nor feasible in practice. The National Congress would not, we are sure, lightly give its sanction to anything which savours of ignoble or futile tactics"

Commenting on the controversy started by the C.D. Committee's report on council entry The Hindu reiterated its view that nothing would be achieved by entering councils and said that the "Pro-entry school has based its premises on the shifting foundations of misconception". It added that the "fact remains that the vast volume of opinion in the country as evidenced by the C D Enquiry Committee is against this view. Would it be wise, we ask, when unity was never more essential than now to enter upon a step which must cause acute controversy". The Hindu said it ought not to be impossible for the "AICC to steer a course between the Scylla of immediate civil disobedience and the Charybdis of council entry that would evoke enthusiasm without provoking it into exuberance".

The All India Congress Committee meeting in Calcutta on November 20 adopted the recommendation of the C.D. Committee to empower the P.C C's to organise limited civil disobedience but on the question of council entry, after four days of debate, found opinion sharply divided and decided to refer the issue to the Gaya Congress session.

Following the AICC decision on Council entry controversy over the issue became more pronounced with The Hindu sticking to the No-Changers' line and finding a powerful opponent in S. Srinivasa lyengar who jumped into the fray in support of council entry and who criticised the paper's attitude and its remarks on the resignation of their party posts by Pandit Motilal Nehru and

C. R. Das on this question. But The Hindu was relentless and when C. R. Das in his presidential address at the Gaya Congress advocated council entry, it said. "It is regrettable that a Congressman of Mr. Das' views who puts almost his whole faith in nation building activities on which too much energy could not be concentrated, should cast longing eyes on the councils. We can only hope that when the Congress decides as we hope it would against the frittering away of energy which is involved in seeking entry into the councils none would more heartily co-operate in carrying out the decision of the Congress than its present president and such of the Congressmen as share his views"

The Gaya Congress, as The Hindu rightly anticipated, voted against council entry and following that decision C. R. Das resigned his office as President and announced that he and those who thought like him would form a party within the Congress to carry out their objectives.

The Hindu noted that "a very definite split has occurred in the Congress and its possible reactions on the future of Congress work leave us frankly apprehensive" The paper contended that Das' action amounted to secession, "Mr. Das assures us that he and his party will work on parallel lines towards the common objective. Parallel lines have an uncomfortable knack of diverging on the least provocation and with two parties and two organisations working side by side but working in mutual conflict on important issues, it would be safe to prophesy that there will be no lack of provocations. And after all is a separate party so absolutely necessary? Is it entirely beyond the bounds of probability that this fissiparous tendency once given free rein to, it may not extend to within the new party too and turn and rend it. Mr. Das and his colleagues have made such immense sacrifices, have fought the country's and the Congress battles so stoutly and so inspiringly that their defection cannot but be a most unpleasant shock. We earnestly hope that better counsels will prevail and that it may be yet possible for these leaders to shoulder the burden which they would fain cast aside, added to as its weight may be by the realisation that in certain matters they are at variance with the majority of the ranks they lead"

The Hindu, at the same time recognised that there was a certain amount of basis for Das' charge of intolerance against the majority and its leaders in the last Congress. "Is it our imagination", it asked, "or do we really perceive a vein of sacerdotalism in the attitude of the majority? Formulae are excellent things but it is easily possible to ride them to death. There is no place in practical politics for an attitude of stern, unyielding fixity. The sternest of covenants, if it is to be a working proposition, must make allowance for a certain amount of sacrifice even of principles. Majorities are not always in the right, nor is the voice of the people always the voice of God. It is possible for majorities to be foolish and even grotesque. Mr. Das and his friends will recognise that it is somewhat inconsistent to talk of democracy and to threaten revolt when the majority is against you. On the other hand, it cannot be too strongly impressed on the victorious side that majority rule can only be successful as long as it is tolerant, as long as it is conducted in a spirit of give and take".

The council entry controversy ended in a compromise when the AICC in Bombay on May 26, 1923, adopted a resolution appealing to Congressmen not to pursue the "No vote" propaganda among the voters, thus leaving the field open for the Swarajists to contest the elections. Welcoming the decision, The

Hindu said "It would be of course foolish to run away with the idea that with this achievement our storms have been weathered and that all is now going to be plain sailing with the Congress. The Swarajya party have not got all that they asked for but it is safe to presume that they have got as much as they expected . The majority party believes and we need hardly say in our opinion correctly, believes, that the council entry programme is a purposeless waste of energy and a dangerous deflection of effort from the common objective. The Swarajists argue the goal is the same but only the methods are different We would point out the strategic futility of attacks with insufficient forces on two fronts The enemy would find it easy to defeat the attacks in detail The Congress forces are too weak and their morale too low to permit of such a diversion at the present moment But since the separate path has been chalked out it is idle to repine over what ought to have been The Swarajist programme is a settled fact and the only question for the majority to consider is whether to fight that programme on a question of abstract principle or to tolerate it as a foretaste of the kindness and the good things that are in store for the prodigal son when he is surfeited with a diet of husks"

The Hindu had to lift its pen against C. Rajagopalachari who said the AICC resolution on council entry was illegal and should be opposed Criticising his stand The Hindu said his was the only dissentient voice against the AICC compromise resolution "The historian of the future", it wrote, "might derive some degree of amusement from the squabbles — we cannot call them by a more dignified name — that are now so rife in the Congress politics, and wonder at the vehemence with which points of view are urged and defended by their various protagonists. Whatever else these are guilty of they cannot be accused of any consciousness of the supreme ridiculousness of their position There is surely enough in all consciousness in the present case of India to cause any patriotic man to weep tears of blood A great movement, the most promising, the noblest as it is the purest of all attempts at human regeneration now stagnates in action the while its pilots are exhausting their ingenuity in splitting hairs Not for them the task of guiding the great ship to port; they prefer the simpler pleasures of sailing toy boats in muddy puddles, splashing about and splashing each other. Reaction is triumphant in the land and sits enthroned in the counsels of Whitehall. The spirit of racial arrogance subdued and disguised by the necessities of war time, now flaunts it without shame. Soft words from our masters now give place to truculent warnings and no voice of protest is raised to hush the strident screeching of the latest exponent of the White man's burden . . . Solidarity is good, discipline is better but best of all is wise conserving and direction of all available auxiliary forces towards the common end. Have our leaders shown any consciousness of this simple truth? Let their anxiety to prove the enormity of each other's wrongdoing supply the answer. And this game of destructive politics grows apace with the lengthening tale of days until one questions whether anything will be left of the Congress or any political activity at all in the near future. That this is not an idle fear will, we think, be made evident from the manner in which the spirit of revolt appears to be spreading. The cry was raised that the AICC's decision was *ultra vires* — a fittingly impressive phrase whose latinity gives it an aspect almost of being unanswerable. And the cry of defiance is being echoed by Provincial and District Congress Committees, bodies which owe obedience to

the AICC This splendid exhibition of Congress discipline is being encouraged by those who ought to know better and the inevitable result of this kind of topsyturvy politics is not hard to envisage People have lost their sense of perspective and their scale of values has become distorted till we appear to be living in a land of unrealities and absurdities"

C R Das made a hectic tour of Madras Presidency towards the end of June 1923 and The Hindu sent a special Correspondent to cover his meetings and published extensive reports, as it always did whether friend or foe, but plainly told him that the verdict of Tamil Nadu was against him. "It is not surprising", it wrote, "that in cold-blooded, unemotional, practical Tamil Nadu his (C. R. Das') propaganda should have fallen flat. People came in their thousands, they listened, they admired his eloquence and perhaps wondered at his vehemence and went away as sceptical as before as to the mixture which Mr. Das offered as a cure for his country's ills. We are a polite people and believe, unlike those of other provinces, in expressing our disagreement in a polite manner. Mr Das must have been struck with the uniformly courteous manner, in spite of the strong feelings roused, with which he was listened to everywhere The South Indian is open to conviction but he cannot be bullied or ridiculed or driven by rhetorical periods into courses of action of which he is deeply suspicious We cannot help thinking that Mr Das has grievously miscalculated both the scope for action in the field of council entry and the absence of it outside that field. We cannot believe he can succeed in a game in which the bureaucracy is the umpire and can make its own rules. On the other hand there is enough of the spirit of non-co-operation apart from its specific manifestations in the fulfilment of this or that item of the programme in the land to make it a blunder and crime for any leader to despair of his countrymen"

A special session of the Congress in Delhi on September 17, 1922 passed a compromise resolution permitting Congressmen to vote for and contest council elections, while at the same time reaffirming its faith in non-violent non-co-operation and the constructive programme The resolution allowed the Swaraj party to contest the elections but not with the help of Congress funds or organisation The Hindu hailed the compromise and said: "Certainly, in the circumstances it is our considered opinion that no other decision was possible Now that this unhappy controversy has passed into the limbo of the past it is the duty of all Congressmen to face anew and with stout hearts the tremendous tasks that lie before them".

The Hindu in February, 1923 reproduced a review of the situation in India by the special correspondent of the Manchester Guardian in India The Correspondent wrote "The army of non-co-operation has suffered a crushing tactical defeat. It has to reorganise and prepare for a new plan of campaign. Its leaders are divided among themselves and the rank and file have not much confidence in them. But the spirit of non-co-operation remains, not pure Gandhian but distrust of the foreign Government, a longing to be quit of it and an unwillingness to work with it even for the common good. The educated classes and the towns folk are permeated with this spirit. The ryot is affected over a large area as yet rather superficially, it is true, but conditions in the villages are such that the spirit is likely to strike deeper roots. The army is as yet apparently unaffected, but the army is recruited from the villages and

sooner or later must follow the villages' lead even if direct contamination can be avoided. It is often among the best men that this spirit of non-co-operation is strongest. You find it among the best of the moderates. They differ from the non-co-operators only in this, that they have a deep dislike for revolutionary methods. But this dislike is not shared by the country at large, it is felt only by men of exceptional experience or exceptional powers of imagination. The country as a whole is in sympathy with the rashness of the non-co-operators than with the prudence of the Moderates".

The Hindu which identified the Correspondent as J. T. Gwynne I C S (Retd.) who formerly saw service in South India, said his conclusions carried authority by virtue of his intimate association with the administration for over a decade. It added: "For the present we shall be content with pointing out how as shown by impartial observers, like The Guardian correspondent, we are deadily in earnest in shaking off the hated thralldom we now labour under and how we will neither pause nor rest till we attain our destined goal".

As Mahatma Gandhi completed one year in jail The Hindu brought out a four-page special supplement on March 18 to mark the occasion. The main story had these headings: "A full year in jail. Mahatmaji's great Tapasya. Shall he still be in prison? Shall Swaraj yet be far off?" The supplement carried the favourite sayings of Gandhiji, a poem on him by T. L. Vaswani, extracts from his writings and a garland of tributes from far and near.

The Hindu in an editorial reminded its readers that Gandhiji had been acclaimed by Christian divines and thinkers themselves as "the modern representative of Christ and the greatest man living on earth today". It added: "The shame of the inertia and depression that marked our political life following the disappearance of the leader from our midst belongs to those of us outside who are enjoying the physical liberty that is now denied to the soul who so marvellously led the country to the time of his arrest and imprisonment. The whole world is in need of the Mahatma with his magic word of love and non-violence. So Indians owe it not only to themselves but to humanity at large to work for and establish Swaraj when alone shall Mahatmaji be honourably released and thus enable him to carry on his torch of satyagrahic freedom and light to the salvation of a suffering world".

The Hindu's relations with Lord Willingdon, Governor of Madras, had never been cordial and much more so after the demand for security from it in 1919 and its consistent support of the non-co-operation movement. It wrote of him in February 1923: "One does not exactly figure him fiddling while Madras is burning but there is a striking contrast between the earnestness with which he takes his social and sporting engagements and the light heartedness with which he treats his political responsibilities".

So when The Hindu complained on November 12, 1923 that the Governor's Private Secretary had refused to give it a list of members nominated to the Legislature by the Governor on the ground that The Hindu was a supporter of non-co-operation, there was no surprise. But The Hindu twitted the Governor by uttering some uncomfortable truths. It wrote, "We seem to remember occasions when we have been asked with a fine and charitable disregard of our non-co-operation proclivities to support some doubtless worthy movement which is the object of Their Excellencies' benevolent interest. And daily, presumably with a view to publication, we are favoured with a meticulous

catalogue of Their Excellencies' engagements. We could cite other instances to show that the Government sometimes consider that the newspaper, even a non-co-operating newspaper, may have its own uses. We do not seriously suppose that H. E. Lord Willingdon has so little sense of humour as to approve of the antics of his Private Secretary. If he does it may be worthwhile for him to explore possibilities of this new type of non-co-operation."

As a post-script it may be added that The Hindu did manage to publish the names of the members nominated to the Council getting them from other sources.

The Hindu had broken a self-imposed silence on the future of native states by writing frankly about them in February, 1921, which was a reflection of the views expressed by its Editor when he visited some of the southern states during the early stages of the non-co-operation movement. The Hindu wrote: "Is there any room in the self-governing and self-contained India that we envisage for arid patches where reaction and autocracy run rife? We have before pointed out that the question is a delicate one since it is complicated by the touch of sentiment involved in the fact that these states represent so many mouthfuls saved from the tentacles of the British octopus. The time has now come in our opinion to enquire whether for the sake of a sentiment that as we advance towards self-government is bound to diminish in its appeal, we should consent cheerfully to endure what we cannot but regard as clogs to our national unity. It would be as hypocritical as it would be useless to pretend that from the point of respect for civil rights the best ruled of Indian states can stand comparison with British India. It can then be small consolation to argue that an Indian would rather be trodden upon by one of his own race than by a foreigner which after all is what the sentimental argument amounts to. The toad under the barrow probably does not feel more resigned because the instrument of its torture is of indigenous manufacture. It is a matter capable of clear proof that the subject of an Indian ruler is no happier than his neighbour who flaunts his "slave mentality" under a foreign yoke. Some of these states, it is true, are well administered but their very showiness serves to remind one how much depends upon the will of a single person and upon his qualities, good or bad. A sudden kink in that personage's brain may bring down the whole elaborate edifice like a house of cards. It would be well for those who are tempted to enthuse about "progress" in Indian states to seriously ponder how far it is wise for the happiness of millions of our fellow countrymen to depend upon the whims of autocrats. Pickwick, it will be remembered, pointed out the importance of the jury having a good breakfast before the trial. Is it consistent with our new conception of political values to view unmoved the fact that the fate of a third of India depends upon, the digestions, physical, mental and moral of a few individuals?"

Holding these views on the princely states as it did, The Hindu published a series of articles on the administration of Hyderabad by its well known contributor, St. Nihal Singh and the result was that the paper was banned in Hyderabad State.

An Associated Press of India message from Hyderabad on September 19, 1923 said: "H. E. H. the Nizam has issued a firman prohibiting The Hindu of Madras from circulating in Hyderabad State. The ban follows a series of

articles The Hindu ran under the heading "Hyderabad Today" by Mr. St. Nihal Singh".

The Hindu commented: "In the case of Indian rulers who are a law unto themselves, one may ask in vain for either reason or justice or consistency in their actions. It may, however, be presumed since The Hindu has not hitherto stood between the wind and His Exalted Highness' nobility that the articles recently contributed by Mr. St. Nihal Singh to these columns and the controversy over them have contrived to upset the equanimity of H. E. H. and his only less exalted advisers. These articles need not be introduced anew to our readers. They speak for themselves and we have no doubt have considerably edified them. That it was possible for them to give offence we now learn for the first time from the action of the one person to whom they ought most to have appealed. For what are these articles? They are by a gentleman, a trained journalist of considerable standing and repute".

The Hindu noted that Mr. Nihal Singh was for several months a guest of the state and of Sir Ali Imam (President of the Executive Council). He was allowed to go everywhere, see everything and every facility was afforded to him for his observations. There was however apparently one mental reservation. He was to take notes but he was not to print them. At least if he did he was to exercise a wise discrimination and respect the unwritten firman: "Of the Nizam thou shalt speak nothing but praise". "Not being of that order of journalists which believes in repaying hospitality with flattery laid on with a trowel, Mr. Nihal Singh thought he was free to express what he really thought".

The Hindu said there was nothing in the articles which any ruler ought to resent. "Now, we hold no brief for Mr. Nihal Singh's views and conclusions. His conclusions may be right or wrong. His picture may be overdrawn or the reverse. As a matter of fact as the columns of The Hindu will show, Mr. Singh has met with as considerable a measure of criticism as of support and in the former category are included many who have no official axes to grind and who are not impelled by virtue of their official position to act as self-appointed publicity agents for H. E. H. It will be thus seen that the exalted ruler has no grievance real or imaginary against The Hindu or against Mr. Singh. The latter is one whom he himself delighted to honour but a short time back. Unless it is suggested that the feeding was for the purpose of keeping his mouth more usefully or less dangerously employed, it cannot be made an accusation against Mr. Singh that he bit the hand that fed him. As for The Hindu H. E. H.'s attitude is even more extraordinary. The Hindu was fulfilling one of the ordinary and legitimate duties of a journal by ventilating public affairs. It cannot be said it was either unfair or one-sided. Defenders of the Hyderabad regime had as ready access to its columns as its critics. What then was the object of the proscription? It would seem that the only possible conclusion to be drawn from the action of the Hyderabad authorities is that they have no use for anything so new fangled as public opinion, just as they have no use for methods of action which are favoured in countries which remain unblest with paternal Government of the Hyderabad type. .. The fierce light of publicity which has been shed on Hyderabad must have been to it in the nature of a sun bath but apparently it is not so regarded by the wise administrators who control the destinies of that state. If they have nothing to hide why should they be afraid of honest criticism? Can it not be reasonably inferred that what they



fear is not criticism but publicity? . . . We hold that it is in itself an act of gross maladministration to put a ban on the entry of honest journals into the state without any sort of notice or warning to the alleged offender"

The Hindu in October, 1923 published another series of articles on Hyderabad by Mr Nihal Singh and capped it with a two and a half column leader explaining its stand. It detailed the occasions when it had praised the Nizam and his Government for their developmental activities and the only criticism it had made when the Nizam took over personal rule from his prime minister. It added "If H. E. H. Government persist in the foolish course of shutting out bonafide criticism of a perfectly well meant and dignified kind, one hesitates to envisage the ultimate consequences there to the sovereign and subjects alike. As for ourselves we have the satisfaction of feeling that in however a humble way we have done our duty by the Nizam as well as by his subjects — a satisfaction which notwithstanding the petulant act of despotism displayed by H. E. H. the Nizam is all the more welcome because we know we have earned the gratitude of the people of Hyderabad at large".

How sensitive the Nizam's Government was to criticism and the lengths to which it went to stifle it was revealed in an incident disclosed by Kasturiranga Iyengar in July, 1921. He was addressing a meeting in Madras held to protest against the externment orders passed by the Nizam's Government against three citizens and of the Rajah of Pudukotah against S. Satyamurthi. He said a young man of 20, called Raja Bahadur wrote an article for publication in The Hindu regarding Police persecution of certain individuals in the State. That man was interned for several months and he was not given an opportunity to defend himself. He was not told what he had done to justify his internment. Kasturiranga then mentioned how he came to be arrested. A C.I.D. official of Hyderabad posing as a compositor took a job in The Hindu press for three weeks and stole the letter written by the young man to The Hindu. Then the pseudo compositor went back to Hyderabad and arrested Raja Bahadur. "That was a most dishonest and fraudulent way of catching hold of a young man", Kasturiranga said.

The Hyderabad ban on The Hindu was removed in May, 1924. The Hindu was not informed of it directly but learnt about it in an indirect way through a report in the *Indian Daily Mail* of Bombay from its Secunderabad Correspondent. The Hindu wrote: "A sort of confirmation of the news is received in this office in the form of enquiries from the Nizam's dominions asking for supply of this paper and mentioning that the ban has been removed".

The Hindu was led to write an obituary of a leading princely ruler on August 28, 1923 through a bloomer by Reuter. Reuter reported from London on August 27, that "the Gaekwar of Baroda died at Flushing en route from Berlin. Later the Gaekwar of Baroda was taken ill in train and was found dead on its arrival in Amsterdam".

The Hindu paid a tribute to the Gaekwar and said "And it is no derogation from the merit of other Indian princes to say that he leaves behind the peerless legacy of a great name, not merely for administrative virtues of a high order but for statesmanship and a quick eye to detect the needs of a progressive community like that over which he ruled".

The next day Reuter announced the Gaekwar was alive and it was his son, Jaisingh Rao Gaekwar who died. The Hindu in an apology wrote "The Gaekwar

now joins the select band of great men who have been privileged to read their own obituary notices. It is not yet explained how such an extraordinary mistake came to be made but it is apparent that the English Press was not more accurately informed than the Indian for we read of long memoirs which judging from our own Special Correspondent's version are a lurid commentary upon the mentality of the British Press". The Hindu published under Reuter's denial story a special story from its Correspondent of the memoirs carried by The Times and other British papers on the Gaekwar, trying to show it had erred in good company.

Reuter came in for much severe attention from The Hindu over another incident in December, 1922. On December 20, Reuter cabled a story of a "programme for separation of India from the British Empire by means of revolution" drawn up by Mr. M. N. Roy, Indian Communist living in Berlin and supported by the Soviet Government. Reuter's story added "It will be interesting to see whether the Congress adopts the plan or any part of the plan suggested". Reuter described M. N. Roy as follows: "Mr. Roy's name is really Narendranath Bhattacharjee. He has been a political dacoit in Bengal, a conspirator with the Germans in Java in 1915, a fugitive from arrest in California in 1917, a Bolshevik propagandist in Mexico and since 1920 a wanderer between Berlin, Moscow and Tashkent, depending for his livelihood on literary work and political intrigue done for his employers, the Russian communists".

The Hindu criticised Reuter for cabling the story and said: "Reuter has chosen to inflict upon us several thousand words of the sheerest twaddle purporting to be a manifesto issued by one M. N. Roy containing what Reuter grandiloquently describes as "a programme for the separation of India from the British Empire by means of a revolution". Now Reuter when it suits his book can on occasion display the obstinate reticence of bi-valve. There have been occasions when on matters of interest to India he has absolutely left us in the dark or at best left vast hiatuses for the imagination to fill up. But when it comes to propaganda Reuter can display the reckless disregard of a Northcliffe for the sordid monetary side of the question. It may be news to Reuter to know that the manifesto that he has taken so much pains to cable to us is but one of a series of propagandist efforts of Indian revolutionaries who are as actively opposed to the basic doctrines of non-co-operation as are the Moderates, that some of these documents have been prohibited from time to time by the Government and that finally the actual manifesto, the forwarding of which has cost him or somebody else, a pretty penny, has been in our hands for sometime and treated by us with the importance it deserves. We know it suits the ulterior purposes of the enemies of our movement to say that it has behind it Russian gold. That lie was sedulously propagated sometime ago and was promptly nailed at the mast though to quarters so brazen and lost to decency, the mere trifling detail that a thing is not true is no obstacle to its wide broadcasting".

The Hindu said: "If Reuter and those behind him expect any section of the Indian public to stampede because he cries wolf they are very much mistaken. The Congress is not going to play anybody's game whether Bolshevik or German. It stands on a programme of its own, with a creed of its own, with a code of conduct of its own. Its programme may change and may change in direction which may cause Reuter and his friends to nod wise heads and say

they suspected it all along But its creed will remain not separation but equality of status and voluntary partnership on a basis and within the limits of mutual benefit and its code of conduct will be firmly based on non-violence”

To complete the story we may mention that later M N Roy and a number of other communists, including Singaravelu Mudaliar from Madras, were arrested and charged with conspiracy to wage war against the King and his Government in India and it was known as the Cawnpore conspiracy case

On August 25, 1923 The Hindu made an interesting revelation “We have from time to time received communications addressed to a gentleman in Madras who is a declared adherent of the Communist International from Germany and Holland. These letters were enclosed in covers addressed to the Editor. They have hitherto been forwarded unopened to the addressee because it was our impression that the forwarders were in ignorance of the correct address We are now led to doubt whether this is correct and whether the object is not to evade any possible censorship by the authorities. We must in future refuse to be a party to such evasions or to act as a post-office for communist propaganda We have therefore decided to withhold and destroy such communications in future”.

A notable death which The Hindu reported on August 14, 1922, was that of Dewan Bahadur C Karunakara Menon who was a colleague of G. Subramania Aiyer on The Hindu and its Editor after G Subramania Aiyer left it The Hindu wrote of him “Dewan Bahadur C Karunakara Menon . may perhaps be reckoned as the last of the race of those now “old fashioned” journalists who embraced journalism more in response to a patriotic call than as a profession Like Mr K Natarajan and other well known Madrassi journalists, he was fashioned at The Hindu office where he worked for a number of years as a Sub-Editor and Assistant Editor under the veteran publicist-journalist, the late Mr G Subramania Aiyer He was later for sometime in editorial charge of this journal When he left this office for fresh fields and pastures new, he had built up such a high reputation that he has never in later life been able to excel it.

Mr. Karunakara Menon was reputed as one of the ablest leader writers in those days, when journalistic success depended on one’s ability to combine in oneself the functions of political school master, agitator and pamphleteer. Mr Karunakara Menon was a quiet, unassuming gentleman, always courteous and considerate to a fault to all those who approached him for help Political differences notwithstanding he had always a soft corner for The Hindu”

Speaking at a condolence meeting, Kasturiranga Iyengar gave particulars about the career of Karunakara Menon Karunakara Menon graduated from the Presidency College, Madras and entered The Hindu as a Sub-Editor under G Subramania Aiyer. He had as his colleagues, K Natarajan and K Subba Rao In his work as Sub-Editor he showed he was a born journalist and a very talented writer. When he took over as Editor on the departure of G Subramania Aiyer, Karunakara Menon fully maintained the traditions of The Hindu. He was master of a very elegant and attractive style His knowledge of public questions was wide and varied and in the handling of those questions in the paper he showed a broad outlook and high minded tolerance of opposing views He took interest in the public life of the city and was a Congressman. In 1905 when the proprietorship of the paper changed hands, Karunakara Menon was offered the post of Joint Editor but he preferred to live a life of absolute

independence and he started the *Indian Patriot*. In conducting that paper he showed remarkable ability and enterprise and for many years his ability, equable temperament, and manners both in his public and private life, gained him many friends. The paper also was for a pretty long time having a wide popularity. He supported the Minto-Morley Reforms when many nationalist papers were not quite in favour of that scheme. Lord Minto formed a very favourable impression of his writings and it was during his Viceroyalty that Karunakaran was awarded the title of Dewan Bahadur. But shortly after the popularity of the journal began to decline and it had to be closed.

A. Rangaswami Iyengar who spoke at the same meeting said when Karunakaran was in financial difficulties the Justice Party tried hard to get him into their fold but to his lasting credit he refused to give up the Congress and identify himself with a policy subversive of the interest of the country.

The Hindu in an outspoken article on the Justice Party in office in Madras presidency said in September, 1922 that it had not advanced the cause of democracy by one single inch. "It cannot be denied that a movement which started as democratic has rapidly degenerated into one of oligarchical tyranny. A revolt against social injustice has in its partial success only served to bring into relief a greater imposition and fixed more firmly the shackles of the depressed. The inequalities remain and the only achievement has been to substitute one tyranny for another. It is true, therefore to say that in the direction of social amelioration the movement has achieved nothing. On the political side its results have equally been baneful. It has not advanced the cause of democracy by one single inch. It has served to elevate into power a caucus of politicians of average ability united in a common bond of hatred and jealousy of one particular community and using its power to deal faithfully and unfairly with that community. It has treated the reforms as a scramble for the loaves and fishes of office and succeeded in creating in the name of justice and equality a situation which has become absolutely intolerable for such Brahmins as have the misfortune to be Government servants. It has succeeded in communalising even education by ridiculous travesty of advisory selection committees for colleges. We are willing to accept these results as temporary aberrations, the fruits of the earlier exuberance of victory. We cannot ignore, however sympathetic we may be towards really democratic movements, the tendencies of a movement that is based on a desire to level down and not to level up. For that must bring in its train the weird nemesis of a communalism run mad, of claims put forward on behalf of this community and that, of complaints of injustice and of jealousies which cannot for ever hide their faces from the light of a ribald world and which are already making themselves felt."

The nemesis of communalism run mad mentioned by The Hindu came to the Justice Party in November, 1923 when following a split in the party, Dr C. R. Reddi, one of its members, moved a no-confidence motion against the Ministry headed by the Raja of Panagal. Although the motion was supported by the Swarajists and Independents it was lost by a majority of 22 votes, the European bloc and officials and nominated members voting against it. The Hindu's comment was that the debate showed "that whose reputation so ever might survive that of the Ministry was gone for ever. It was no doubt easy to draw up an indictment against a Ministry with so farcical a record and brilliantly as

leaders of the opposition and Dr C R Reddi in particular rose to the occasion, it is difficult to resist the impression that he was assiduously pouring water on a drowning rat and had he harped less upon the obvious sins of the Ministry and more on an alternative and really national programme and the ways and means of putting it through, he would have avoided exposing himself to the one really telling argument that was urged against him. It ought not in any well considered system of parties to be possible for the leader of any Ministry to say "After me, the deluge".

Following the widespread indignation in India marked by protest meetings and hartals over British betrayal of Indian interests in Kenya, Srinivasa Sastri, who led the Indian delegation to Kenya, said in a statement on September 4, 1923 "Hard as flint, dry as the Sahara must be the Indian heart which can survey without emotion the long tale of wrongs and indignities to which our people have been subjected within an Empire that talks all the time of human brotherhood and even handed justice" Sastri who spoke of the wrongs done to Indians in Kenya who had exerted their influence to establish a British protectorate there added. "It may not be pleasing to the Government but it is good for them to know that when I declare the attenuation of my faith in the British Empire and in British professions, the only Indians even in "Moderate" circles who dissent are those who avow that they had never any faith in either. The Kenya settlement (denying the rights of Indian settlers) is a grand national humiliation. It shakes the foundations of our public life. Party interests and party shibboleths seem now an irrelevance as well as a heavy handicap".

The Hindu was happy with Sastri's statement and in a rare gesture of praise to one who had been its unsparred object of criticism, said "For lofty patriotism, burning eloquence and fearless candour, his statement must evoke unstinted appreciation from every lover of the country. It is pregnant with significance to those British statesmen who, filled with insolence and racial arrogance are marching through flagrant misrule to the dismemberment of an Empire"

Srinivasa Sastri was much more bitter and openly expressed his disillusionment with British sense of fairness and justice when he spoke at a meeting in Bangalore in December, 1923. After referring to the denial of rights to Indians in Kenya he said "However unwilling I was to recognise it in such vivid colours in the past, I can no longer conceal from myself that without a Government that we could make and unmake as free people, we are bound to lose in the struggle in the future. It is to that great objective that all our energies have now to be bent. All talk of moderate and immoderate, of extreme and mean in Indian politics has now no meaning for me. All must unite round this banner of Dominion Status and that promptly"

Commenting on Sastri's statement The Hindu asked why should the Liberals not rejoin the Congress now that Sastri had spoken of his disillusionment with Britain "The last elections have made it clear that Liberalism is a disembodied spirit, a form without substance. Mr Sastri's speech supplies the arguments as to why there is no necessity for its continued existence either in the spirit or in the flesh. We grant it is a hard thing for the leaders of a party which set out three years ago brimming over the spirit of high endeavour to return clothed in the sack cloth and ashes of a mission disappointingly elusive. And yet if the Liberals are convinced that the way of advance is not by the way of

co-operation what else is there for them to do except to acknowledge how right their critics were at the start when they warned them that playing jackal to the bureaucracy even with the best of intentions was not merely an unpatriotic but a heart-breaking and thankless game. And if they are convinced of it what in the name of common sense is the use of all the paraphernalia of separate conferences and speeches and resolutions? It has been made clear to the Liberals that it is futile to think of serving their country by co-operation with the bureaucracy or by burnt offerings at the altar of imperialism. That dangerous and debilitating delusion being dispelled, will not the Liberals discard the spurious trappings of a mummary that has been mercilessly exposed and assist in helping their countrymen to assert their strength? In the cynical code of western politics rights exist only so long as they are backed by the strength to maintain them"

# End of a Noble and Patriotic Career

27

**T**HE LAST MONTH of 1923 saw the end of a great, noble and patriotic career. Kasturiranga Iyengar, Editor and maker of The Hindu, passed away in the early hours of December 12, 1923, after a period of illness which had led to his being confined to his bed for over a year. He was then 64.

Kasturiranga Iyengar had been ailing for a year and six months ever since he underwent a serious operation for hernia in April, 1922. For six months or more he attended office and took part in public engagements in spite of ill-health and also toured round India as a member of the Congress Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee. The strain imposed by his activities seriously affected his health and he was compelled to drop all outdoor work. Even then he constantly thought of his country's progress, advising leaders of political, industrial and social movements, who sought his advice in large numbers, reading newspapers and marking extracts for publication in The Hindu, writing instructions for the Editorial staff and guiding the policy of the paper. He daily devoted two hours in the afternoon to listen to religious and devotional songs with deep interest. In the closing days he underwent another operation and although he stood it well his condition showed no improvement. In the early hours of December 12, as he was talking to the members of his family, he suffered a severe bronchial attack and shortly after breathed his last.

In a tribute, C. Vijayaraghavachariar, his intimate friend and adviser, spoke of his last days. "His life during his prolonged last days endeared him to all. Insensitive to his bodily pain, ever serene and pursuing his intellectual habits of health, he set an inspiring example, teaching how a noble soul can quit the body. He had no thought of himself but of others, of God and the country. Not a word was ever uttered to any member of his family, a friend or a visitor, complaining of his ill-health. His doctors, allopathic, unani and ayurvedic admired his patience and courage."

The Hindu in a tribute to its late Editor said "His unfailing courtesy, even temper and keen sense of justice called and obtained their response in an affection and a loyalty that was perhaps unique in the measure of their intensity. Time may bring its anodynes but unless gratitude is not a virtue but a mere word he will have an abiding monument in the heart of the entire staff of this journal. Political memories are short but they ought not be too short to recall at what a low ebb Indian journalism was 20 years ago when with that rare

courage that has been his outstanding characteristic Mr Kasturiranga Iyengar took over The Hindu. The lot of an Indian journalist is not exactly a bed of roses now but then it was most emphatically a bed of thorns. Hagridden by the threat of financial insolvency, breathing constantly in an atmosphere of public apathy to the vital aspects of national life, beset always by the fear of offending powerful forces, official and otherwise, whom it would be fatal to displease, it was a belittling life that the journalist lived. Whatever may be said of present day journalism it is indubitable that the sordidness of those early days has departed for ever."

Declaring that "What The Hindu is now it owes entirely to the unflinching determination and undaunted courage" of its late Editor, The Hindu added "He made it possible for it to realise in some measure the high ideals with which its original founders started. Setting a high level of criticism in public affairs, he infused a vigour and candour of expression balanced by an essentially sane angle of vision that arrested attention and commanded respect. With his advent, the voice of the Press was no longer a feeble and unconvinced bleat in the wilderness, it was a clarion call which might annoy but could not be ignored".

The Hindu recalled that the new tone of the Press was the index of the preliminary wave of political awakening, the first forerunner of the mighty surge that was to come later and how that awakening was met by the authorities. "Manipulated evidence, a compliant judiciary and monstrous sentences for verbal excesses, these combined to impose a reign of terror in which the nascent sense of patriotism appeared likely to find its grave. At a time when people went about with bated breath and whispering humbleness, The Hindu continued its policy of outspoken and fearlessly trenchant criticism of individual officials as well as of the short sighted policy of the Government".

The Hindu said Kasturiranga Iyengar's criticism was not confined to officials but extended to politicians and added "When to balance the orgy of repression and give it a colourable *quid pro quo*, the Government adopted a policy of rallying the Moderates it fell to his lot to criticise with the same unbending sternness many of his old colleagues in the Congress and many with whom he had long enjoyed an intimate and prolonged friendship. In the hypersensitive atmosphere that then prevailed and still in some measure prevails, every criticism was regarded as an unfriendly act and was resented as such. That did not deter him though it cost him many friendships and created some bitter enmities, strong in the consciousness that the straight path in scorn of consequence was the only sure path. In the steady support he had from the public he recognised the appreciation of his motives which had been maligned no less than of his judgments which had been abused. This attitude he consistently preserved during the whole of his editorship of The Hindu, that no leader is above criticism because he is well meaning, that no policy is sacrosanct as such, and he was not averse on occasions to face the frowns not only of influential leaders but even the disapprobation of the public".

The Hindu referred to his political activities and said. "Though an ardent Congressman practically since its inception by those giants to whose endeavours the Indian national movement owes such a heavy debt he was for the earlier and greater portion of his career content to sit in the modest background leaving the struggle for leadership to more self-assertive or



more ambitious personalities. After his acquisition of *The Hindu* his absorption in its development necessitated and the state of politics encouraged a certain detachment though his sympathies were with the then extreme school of thought. He cherished an ardent admiration and affection for Mr. Tilak and his outlook may be said to have been envisaged from the Tilakite angle. . . . And when leadership was thrust upon him he accepted from the overwhelming dictates of duty."

"He leaves an aching void behind", said *The Hindu*, "in the circle of those who knew him intimately, in the longer one of those who knew him as the embodiment of this journal, who numbered him among their leaders but by whom he would better wish to be remembered as one who has tried to serve. It is in the abiding consciousness that personalities such as his do not die that those of us who are left behind will attempt in our several spheres to carry on the task he has laid on us."

V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, who was the target of fierce and vitriolic attacks by *The Hindu*, spoke lovingly of Kasturiranga Iyengar and has left this pen picture of him:

"Proud and sensitive, shy and retiring, he did not court public notice but his conspicuous office forced him as it were on the general eye. Feeble health and slowness of speech prevented him from attaining in public life the fullness of power and influence which by ability, equipment and character he deserved. A habit of careful and selective reading, a natural reticence which afforded occasion for firm and constructive thought, a mental elevation which despite errors and defects more or less serious, kept him safe above the mean and the sordid, combined to give him a position second to none among leading and authoritative exponents of public opinion. His paper attained a fame and influence which far exceeded those which his great predecessor, G. Subramania Aiyer knew (Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer said it was only after Kasturiranga Iyengar assumed control over the paper that *The Hindu* became a newspaper in the fullest sense of the term). He made it far and away the most successful daily newspaper conducted by Indian enterprise in the whole of this country. For many a year during his lifetime you could not go to any part of India and speak of journalism without hearing Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar being mentioned as far and away the most distinguished exponent of Indian journalism. In every part of India officials used to read the editorial articles of *The Hindu* with the most minute care and respect. They always expected some lesson for their daily conduct. He had a great learning, a great memory but above all he was a close student and he kept reading constantly. He read the classics of constitutionalism and as well did he master the art of writing leading articles that when he had an unanswerable case and presented it under heads, one, two and three, he was not content. Having developed his case, he had a way of finishing up with a quotation from Morley or Gladstone or Burke or some of those authorities whom we dare not dispute. For a long time people used to look into his quotations at the end of his leading articles for pithy wisdom, for points that could not be improved and for effect which coming at the end of a carefully written article simply swept aside the opponent. Hard as were his blows, unrelenting as his criticism was he never said a mean thing of his opponents. He was fair and no opponent however often he may have been floored could say of Kasturiranga Iyengar that he had

at any time aimed below the belt. On the other hand I myself can testify not only to blows that I have received and some of them were knock-out blows, but I can testify as well to a good word said without reserve or qualification when in his judgement I had done the right."

Sastri recalled an incident when Kasturiranga Iyengar sent him a telegram welcoming him on his return from a tour of the Dominions and he was asked "Will not people on your side of politics mistake you for sending this telegram of congratulation of welcome and appreciation?" Kasturiranga Iyengar replied "I do not care on which side of politics a person is. When he does a good thing, when he does India a good turn, I may not withhold my praise."

Srinivasa Sastri said: "My sayings and doings ran athwart his policy and owing to the division in Congress ranks after the Surat session of December, 1907, I was no favourite with him and figured frequently in his columns as a servant of India whose services India could do without. This Babylonian exile however was not everlasting. I recall with gratitude many a pat on the back which betokened my restoration to grace and in particular an indignant protest against the persistent abuse of which I was a victim at the hands of Justice (organ of the Non-Brahmin party) which was then alive and spitting fire and brimstone. He was not a man of many words in conversation; his articles too were models of brief and pointed expression and frequently gave me the keenest enjoyment."

This is perhaps the place to make reference to another revelation which Sastri made that he was once offered the Editorship of *The Hindu* and before he could say yes, the offer was withdrawn. But let him say it in his own words. "Once when I was on the staff of the Hindu High School, Triplicane, Mr. Veeraraghavachariar (co-proprietor of *The Hindu* with G. Subramania Aiyer) became angry with his Editor and seriously thought of installing me in the chair of the Mount Road Oracle. He was a man of quick moods however and withdrew the offer before I could recover from my surprise. I speculate occasionally what I should have made of the paper and what it would have made of me. It is certain that an unhappy episode in my life would not have happened."

There were strong rumours in 1908 following the arrest and later release of G. Subramania Aiyer that Kasturiranga Iyengar would be proceeded against for the editorial in *The Hindu* in defence of G. Subramania Aiyer. Late in the night one day Srinivasa Sastri picked up A. Rangaswami Iyengar from his residence in Luz Church Road and drove to "Farm House", residence of Kasturiranga Iyengar. He wanted to caution Kasturiranga of impending trouble of which Sastri believed he had very reliable news. "We found Kasturiranga Iyengar", A. Rangaswami Iyengar said later, "as usual poring over his books and papers. We detailed to him circumstantially what all we had heard and waited for what he might tell us. "Yes, if it is going to come, let it come", he said in his most composed and coolest manner. Sastri was taken aback but persisted. He gently suggested that perhaps he might think of making some necessary arrangements if the thing took place. "Oh! I have no arrangements to make", came the prompt reply. "I do not think there is anything secret or surreptitious in any paper or records at the office", he added.

Others besides Sastri were also worried and a number of them who called on him advised him to leave for Pondicherry as Subramania Bharati did and return when the trouble blew over. His closest friend, C. Vijayaraghavachariar thought otherwise. Wanting to know each other's mind they decided to write it on a piece of paper and when they compared what they had written they found there was a complete identity of views. This was what Vijayaraghavachariar wrote: "An Editor if he wants to honourably discharge his duties should not be afraid of imprisonment or even loss of life".

Enquiries later disclosed that the Government of Madras did plan to take action against Kasturiranga but that the Advocate-General had expressed the view that a prosecution would not be sustainable. Not satisfied with his opinion the Government consulted the Advocate-General of Bombay who gave a similar opinion.

S. Srinivasa Iyengar in a tribute said sterling independence of character and fearlessness "sometimes amounting to audacity" were characteristics of Kasturiranga. "He was not a man who was emotional though every act of his, every judgment of his was coloured as it should be by that emotion which should be hidden and restrained — not that cheap emotion which we see all round us today which expresses itself in sentimentality and other kinds of futile propaganda. Emotion restrained is emotion strengthened and he was a great example of that. As an Editor he was reticent and he was inaccessible and very few really understood what he would say or do on a particular occasion. That aloofness and reticence were invaluable, nay precious, for editors of great journals. The astonishing thing was that Mr. Iyengar who appeared to be hard sometimes was able to inspire affection in many of the people who came into frequent contact with him, an affection which has survived his death and which still brings tears to those of his friends who moved with him. He was greater than his paper as he should be. His personality was greater than *The Hindu* itself. He was himself a separate institution and that is seldom given to a great journalist."

Kasturiranga Iyengar kept himself away from official favours and too close relations with men in the top although at least one Governor of Madras, Sir Thomas Carmichael, who liked him, invited him to meet him as often as possible and inform him if anything went wrong or was against public feeling. Kasturiranga told him that such visits would be misunderstood and also they would not be conducive to journalistic objectivity. The occasions when officials, high and low, harassed the Editor of *The Hindu* for imagined grievances were many. Some we have already mentioned. In one case *The Hindu* published hitherto unpublished proceedings of the Board of Revenue to prove its charge that the Madras Government had not taken any action to implement the recommendations of a commission for speedy establishment of village panchayats although the report was five years old. *The Hindu* was taken to task for publishing the proceedings of the Board of Revenue and knowing that the Editor would not reveal his source the Government urged him not to publish in future unpublished Government papers or information derived from this source. Kasturiranga Iyengar's reply was: "It seems to me that it is too wide a proposition to lay down that any official matter not published under official authority should not be published in the public Press. Unless the nature of the subject requires non-publication or they are specially prohibited from

publication all official matters in which the public are interested must in my opinion be treated as open to the public to know through the medium of the Press".

Kasturiranga Iyengar used the columns of his paper to expose racial arrogance, miscarriage of justice owing to racial discrimination, abuse of power and the kind of colour bar that was practised by some members of the heaven born service G. K. Devadhar of the Servants of India Society who was one of the Editors along with Kasturiranga Iyengar who visited the battle fronts in 1918, said of him "By nature he was sweet and in his dealings obliging but his politics made him somewhat bitter and sceptic—all due to the burning patriotism and restless soul underneath. He wanted India to be one of the foremost nations. He was eminently political and plans of social and economic reconstruction seemed to occupy a secondary place in his thoughts. His sensitiveness to national self-respect and personal respect was very great and that keenness sometimes even on trivial grounds led him sometimes to quarrel with the Englishman who was in charge of our party. I often felt in his company, though we often differed, that I was in the presence of a man deeply earnest though close in his thoughts. There was nothing cowardly about him, he was straight and he respected those that differed from him if only they were equally patriotic and national in their sentiment".

When S. Satyamurthi was introduced to him, the very first words which Kasturiranga Iyengar said were "I see you speak and write frankly, that is why you are not quite liked by some people. But frankness pays in the long run". Satyamurthi said Kasturiranga Iyengar was a thoughtful and attentive host and entertaining in conversation. "Not that he talked much. Silence was his forte but he was a good listener and egged you on to talk. One day he told me that his real work as Editor consisted not in writing which he used to do then only occasionally but only in deciding with his blue pencil what ought to go into his paper, what ought not to, when and in what place. That was his greatest contribution to the building up of *The Hindu*".

Sir R. K. Shamukham Chetti, Finance Minister in Nehru's Government after freedom, said, "I owe my start in public life to Kasturiranga Iyengar. When I had just left college and met him at Coonoor he pressed me to enter public life and was very largely responsible for my election as a young man to the Madras Legislative Council from the Nilgiris".

Dr C. R. Reddi said that under Kasturiranga *The Hindu* instead of being a thing of mere reason and intellect that it had been under G. Subramania Aiyer, began to make an appeal to the people and to rouse popular feelings in support of the causes which the journal was promoting, all of them national causes. Kasturiranga's sympathies were broad and as a personality he was one of the most charming of men and he used to hold his evening durbars at the Cosmopolitan Club where many would surround him to talk about the things of the day. Independent he always was, yet Kasturiranga had the grit to stand out and fight against odds; obstinate he was on occasions but he had an uncanny gift of being obstinate on the right subject at the right moment and events justified him every time. "His writings were generally pitched more in an intellectual than emotional key", said an admirer, "but sharp and incisive as his criticisms were the effect in cold print was even better. . . . He used his gifts

and opportunities wisely, there was never any malice behind his criticism and even those who came in for his criticism learnt to esteem him"

Kasturiranga Iyengar had a strong attachment to Sir (then Mr ) C P Ramaswami Aiyer but this did not prevent him from attacking his politics "The Hindu often hit him hard", a senior member of the staff recalled "On one occasion "C P " came in handy for vigorous criticism I was going to deal with the subject but Kasturiranga stopped me saying 'Why should you gratuitously hurt him? The Hindu can satisfy the public necessities' Of course in every case this spirit underlay the attitude of Mr Kasturiranga. He was not afraid to strike but was unwilling to wound".

A bitter political opponent of his Sir K. V Reddi, who was a leading light of the Justice Party, said of Kasturiranga: "If there was a gentleman in the country who was able to turn journalism into a great power and who made it successful as a profession it was Kasturiranga. Today The Hindu is the most powerful and influential daily newspaper in the country When there is criticism in the paper even the highest officials of the Government shake in their seats"

Kasturiranga hated pettifogging of all kinds but he spared none in his criticisms once he was convinced they were called for in public interests He kept up however social relations with his opponents and some of his intimate friends were those who in politics bitterly differed from him Always grave, dignified and aloof he was yet never unkind and he harboured no animosities whatsoever Even his bitterest enemies respected him. He transformed the quality of silence into a classic virtue He had an excellent sense of humour. It was subdued and pleasant in keeping with his general make-up He enjoyed a joke but without that demonstration so foreign to his nature He was annoyed once when the paper mistakenly included C Vijayaraghavachariar's name in the list of speakers put down for a meeting and Vijayaraghavachariar wrote a nasty letter saying he was hurt to discover the "commission of forgery in unsuspected quarters" When Kasturiranga was annoyed he never got into a paroxysm of rage "There was a knitting of the brows, perhaps", as one eye-witness described it, "the face slightly upturned indicated disapproval and the crisis was over". In general he was imperturbable He was perfectly methodical in his work and he went through the office routine with the precision of a clock He set his face against idleness, slovenliness and all sorts of perfunctory work. His unostentatious manner stood against his generous instincts being advertised but those who moved with him intimately knew that he was ever ready to discover and encourage new talent, to help struggling journalists and in other ways to aid those who sought his help.

When Kasturiranga Iyengar purchased The Hindu in 1905 the paper had a high political reputation and as low a financial outlook as possible The former attracted Kasturiranga and the latter failed to intimidate him. He had been one of the leaders of the profession in the Coimbatore bar where he was practising before he gravitated to Madras. He took an interest in local affairs and general politics and he was known for his public spirit even in the early part of his career in Coimbatore. In Madras in spite of his clear-headedness, sound knowledge of law and gifts of expression he did not rise to the height of his profession, one reason being his heart was not in law so much as in politics "One would have thought that the conduct of a daily newspaper", said Sir P S. Sivaswami Aiyer, "was a somewhat hazardous enterprise

on the part of one who had turned forty and who had not previously worked in the profession of journalism. But journalism had its attractions for Mr. Iyengar. It supplied him with opportunities for serving the interests of the country in a manner which was most congenial to him. It was in the profession of journalism that he found his true metier. He was a man of great strength of character, great determination and of iron will. No obstacles could possibly daunt him. He was one of those who believed largely in the educative functions of a journalist. He conceived it part of the duty and mission of a journalist to guide and lead public opinion and carried it out in practice. Of the standards and the obligations of a journalist he had the very highest notions which were in accordance with the best traditions of English journalism. He was a man of strong likes and dislikes but with all that he recognised the obligation of giving an opportunity to people who differed from him to express their views in the columns of *The Hindu*. He never quailed before opposition and he pursued whatever policy commended itself to him with dauntless courage. He was essentially a strong man. He was quiet and imperturbable and a man of great equanimity of spirit. He was a man who was ready and willing to give his ear to many but who gave his voice to very few except perhaps to his most intimate friends".

"When he took over *The Hindu* 'with a circulation of 800 copies' as I think he once told me", a close associate of Kasturiranga said, "he stepped from certain prosperity to risky speculation. He had a sound practice at the bar and had not to complain of lack of a fair share of the good things of life. When with a Titan's tread he walked into the field of journalism he did so to challenge the consequences provided only duty were done. He lived to make *The Hindu* the most successful paper in the land as also the very model of integrity. He founded a tradition and carried it on till he handed it down to worthy successors. *The Hindu* is a triumph of his moral earnestness; a victory for the unrelenting trait in him to face odds and conquer them."

The first five years of *The Hindu* after he took over were anxious moments for Kasturiranga, but the firmness, courage and dignity with which he conducted the paper through the strenuous and trying days of the regime of Governor Sir Arthur Lawley, brought him rich dividends in terms of a growing circulation and a deepening public confidence in the paper. The paper surmounted its chronic financial difficulties and emerged into a stability and strength it had never known before. Kasturiranga so carefully husbanded the revenues of the paper that he was able to pay off the accumulated liabilities that had been inherited as a mortgage on the paper when he had purchased it. With the growth in circulation, advertisement revenue was also growing. European business houses which boycotted nationalist newspapers found they could no longer ignore *The Hindu* which was growing in readership and influence. At the time of Kasturiranga's death the circulation stood at 17,000, a considerable figure at that time and described as phenomenal. The paper witnessed significant improvements in 1923. The premises of *The Hindu* were enlarged and a new rotary printing press was installed. A battery of modern composing machines was set up and arrangements were made for expeditious transmission of news by telegram and cable and for the quicker delivery of the paper to its readers even in remote areas.

Kasturiranga reviewed the trials and tribulations of the paper in the past 15 years when in 1920 on his 61st birthday he replied to an address of felicitation presented to him by the citizens of Madras. "The last 15 years have been in many ways a momentous and eventful period in the history of the country", he said "Southern India has thrown off the lethargy usually attributed to it and in its social and political activity it stands unsurpassed by any portion or province of India. The Hindu has been a bark sailing in troubled waters and it may be fairly claimed for it, without undue self-ostentation, that it has breasted with steadiness and success the waves of reaction and repression which are the inevitable concomitants of a bureaucratic Government. Purity of character, freedom from corruption and earnestness of purpose are by no means sure passports to the goodwill or even tolerance of the powers that be in the existing system of Government. We are constantly reminded by the happenings in the country of the observation of Charles James Fox that 'Civil liberty can have no security without power' "

The citizens' address told Kasturiranga "Amidst a variety of trials and difficulties in one of the most critical periods of our political struggle, you have continued to hold aloft the highest ideals of the nation and in spite of obstructions and opposition you have persisted, toiled and hoped in the true temper of genuine service to the motherland. You have been to us a noble example of public duty and your work throughout has been inspired by the belief that life is a great and noble calling, an elevated and lofty destiny. Imbued with uprightness of intention and singleness of purpose you have in the columns of *The Hindu* fought the battles of our emancipation, political, social, economic, moral and intellectual in fear of God but in fear of no man"

Kasturiranga was a stickler for accuracy and again and again he impressed upon his editorial staff the importance of correct facts. He insisted on those serving under him resting their statements on verified facts and would not pass them without being shown the authority for them. Steeped as he was in the traditions of law, he delighted to let facts and authorities state their own case. One of his Assistant Editors remarked: "A peculiar characteristic of his leading article was the simple marshalling of admitted facts and the citation of accepted authorities, which by themselves, constitute the most telling comment possible on the subject under consideration. He had his own views about men and things but he was tolerant of others' views and did not wish to impose his own on them. He stood for equal opportunities for all and he had a reverence for public opinion".

"Social justice, freedom of the individual, equality of opportunity, absence of a privileged class and of class domination are all essential elements in a well-established democratic community", Kasturiranga remarked once "Freedom and fellowship are of the essence of a contented and progressive life. Political and religious freedom are of little avail without economic freedom. That scheme of social welfare is the best in which no class or special interests have precedence over the good of the social whole. All the limbs in the body politic should be healthy and strong and be free to develop. All artificial hindrances to growth should be removed, free opportunity to advance must be given to all and those who are backward in the race of life must be helped" He wanted labour to be treated well not only in the matter of wages, but far more as human beings. He was for ever for upholding the dignity and the self-respect of honest labour. He was perhaps one of the very first leaders

in India to advocate payment of a share in surplus profits to labour (payment of bonus which is now enjoined on employers by law) in a very important leading article in *The Hindu* in which he spoke of capitalism and labour

The Assistant Editor, already referred to, said of him "The older he grew and the more a fatal illness confined him to his residence, the more radical he became. Where he had reasons to suspect that a member of the staff held views opposed to the paper's on any public issue, he was kind enough not to ask that particular person to write on that subject. Those who had ever the privilege of meeting him or serving under him will always remember his urbanity, the old world grace and charm of his manner, his quick eye to detect all the bearings of a problem, his easy and assured self-mastery, his avoidance of irritating side issues and his calmness".

We spoke of Kasturiranga's interest in Labour welfare. In March, 1920 he helped to organise the South Indian Railway Employees' Association at Tiruchi and he was elected its first President. Labour leaders like B. Shiva Rao, V. Chakkara Chetty, B. P. Wadia and T. V. Kalyanasundaram Mudaliar sought his advice and help on labour problems. Chakkara Chetty said of him in 1923 "Labour ought to be grateful to his memory for the support he gave their cause in Madras. In 1921, the Pulianthope trouble took place when 10,000 labourers were locked out of the B and C Mills in the city. Choolai, Purasawakkam and Vepery at that time, were under something like a martial law administration. At that time in those places the police bayonets were gleaming. The labour leaders were threatened by the Governor with deportation. Then it was that *The Hindu* under the Editorship of Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar came forward and defended their cause".

The Kerosene Oil Workers Union, the Madras Labour Union and many other labour organisations found in him a generous patron and a champion of their interests. He was interested in the uplift of the untouchables (called "Depressed classes") and he was the Vice-President of the Madras branch of the Depressed classes Mission Society, of India.

He took interest in any movement which intended to promote the welfare of youth. He was ready to help young people in anything they undertook and guide them in wise ways. He took a prominent part in the scout movement in Madras of which he was one of the pioneers and founders. He was against Indian emigration and often urged that India was vast enough to feed and clothe her children and bring them up as honest, self-respecting citizens and that sending our countrymen abroad as slaves was a disgrace to us.

He had an aversion to that spurious brilliance which almost always paved the way to bankruptcy. He never forgot to take care of pennies and the pounds took care of themselves. He found comfort in solid simplicity and showy splendour he tabooed. Financially independent and being under no slavish obligations to anyone, he kept his columns thoroughly and one had almost said fiercely independent. "Unawed by influences and unbribed gain" he directed that independence along channels calculated to uplift national life.

G. Subramania Aiyer made "righteousness readable" in *The Hindu* and Kasturiranga made "readable righteousness" remunerative. Kasturiranga was steeped in the ideas and ideals of the Victorian political philosophers and constitutional lawyers, the golden age of what was called Parliamentary nationalism until the Gandhian message of non-co-operation and British



breach of faith stirred him to advocate passive resistance to achieve freedom. A contemporary said of him "An imperturbable calmness of temper, a well-stored mind and a piercing keenness of vision elevated him to a position of commanding eminence wherefrom to view politicians and their contentious views with an air of detachment". Even as tributes were being paid to his memory came the announcement from Bombay that he had been elected President of the newly formed All-India Journalists Association. There was no doubt that he would have occupied the office with distinction and the Indian Press would have found in him a leader and a mentor of whom any country would be proud. It was left to his distinguished son to occupy such a post and achieve a distinction rare in the annals of Indian journalism.

As a politician Kasturiranga Iyengar was high in the councils of the Congress of which he was an ardent member and he provided an influential and mass forum for it in *The Hindu*. He was distressed by the rowdiness displayed at the Surat Congress and did not spare his own hero, Tilak, for his part in that unsavoury incident. But he stood by Tilak against the Moderates whose mentality of petitions and memorials and suppliant posture he hated. The happenings in the Punjab and the Amritsar tragedy were the turning point in his political thinking and his faith in British justice and promises was shattered. The leading articles which appeared in *The Hindu* during this period and which provoked the Madras Government to demand security from it under the Press Act were outpourings of a wounded and bleeding heart and no one who reads them can fail to be swayed by the impassioned castigation of a merciless, soulless bureaucracy which trod under its feet every human right and decency. And when Gandhiji appeared on the scene with his programme of non-violent non-co-operation Kasturiranga had no hesitation in hailing him as the deliverer of the nation. *The Hindu* carried the message of non-co-operation far and wide and the credit for rousing the spirit of nationalism in the south must largely go to the sustained campaign in its columns. But Kasturiranga did not go the whole hog with Gandhiji and through *The Hindu* and at Congress sessions he opposed certain aspects of the programme like boycott of courts, schools and councils and it was only after these were either changed or modified that he gave his support to the movement. It was as a non-co-operator that he attacked the Moderates for their secession from the Congress and their betrayal of the Country's interests. *The Hindu's* leading articles on the Moderates and especially on Srinivasa Sastri, were couched in elegant and polished language bordering on literature but their contents were bitter but true and no patriotic Indian can read them and still remain unaffected.

Kasturiranga had his pet aversion besides the Moderates and one of them was the Theosophical movement and Mrs. Besant its chief protagonist. But Kasturiranga supported Mrs. Besant and her Home Rule movement, fiercely attacking the Government for internment of her and praising her for her services to the country.

When the Non-Brahmin movement was started in Madras Kasturiranga was not pleased, not because of its objective to promote the economic welfare of the Non-Brahmins but because of its narrow political motive and its vindictiveness against a particular community. He in fact said *The Hindu* would support any movement for the social and economic uplift of the Non-Brahmins but the way the sponsors of the Non-Brahmin movement were going about it was

wrong. His worst fears were confirmed when the Non-Brahmin leaders opposed Home Rule and pledged their support to the European-sponsored anti-reform movement

The Hindu wrote in a leading article. "To a certain extent and upto a certain degree it (Non-Brahmin movement) had and has our sympathy, but there is no question that it was disfigured by many excesses and by a good deal of unreasoning hatred which like chickens later came home to roost"

The Hindu stood by the Non-Brahmins' claim for representation in the Legislative Council and when the Meston Award gave them only 28 reserved seats on the council it said they should be given 30 seats as otherwise it was bound to cause "profound disappointment and grave disquiet among the Non-Brahmin community" The Hindu's criticism of the Meston Award was resented by four Brahmin leaders who wrote from Kumbakonam. "We are tempted to doubt the tact and the wisdom that prompted you to write it"

That Kasturiranga had to take quick decisions on grave matters without outside help is revealed in a letter which he wrote to his friend, C Vijayaraghavachariar, on September 23, 1910 in which probably he spoke of a decision he had to take on a particular matter: "It shows to my mind under what grave difficulties a journalist has to do his work and he had to come to a decision upon matters as grave and even graver than this at a moment's notice with scarcely any extraneous help"

Gandhiji paid Kasturiranga a rich tribute when he unveiled his portrait in The Hindu office in 1925. "I believe that Kasturiranga Iyengar represented some of the best that is to be found in journalism. He had a style all his own. He commanded a sarcasm which was also peculiarly his own. Whether he wrote as an opponent or as a friend you could not fail to admire the style in which he wrote. Sometimes the home thrusts that he gave to his opponents, although they felt bitter at the time they were delivered, appeared to bear a great deal of truth in them because he had a most plausible style. He never wavered in his own faith in the country and although he was always a courteous critic he was one of the most fearless critics of the Government. I had on many an occasion to differ from him. But I always valued his decision because I understood thereby wherein lay the weakness of my argument or my position because I cannot recall an occasion when there was not something to be said for the argument that he advanced" Gandhiji said. "A journalist's peculiar function is to read the mind of the country and to give definite and fearless expression to that mind. And I think Kasturiranga Iyengar was almost unrivalled in this quality of his".

Kasturiranga lived a simple life in a big estate in Mowbray's Road, Madras, which he bought in 1905. Before moving into his new home he lived in a house in Mylapore and his neighbour was S. Srinivasa Iyengar who was to play a big if fleeting role in the Indian National Congress and whose name was to figure frequently in the columns of The Hindu. When he was still practising in Madras before buying The Hindu, Kasturiranga drove to the High Court in a dog cart with himself handling the reins. He was one of the very few in Madras to own a motor car when it first arrived and it was a Ford which he retained till the last. Before he came to Madras he was fond of riding in Coimbatore. He was an early riser and took a brisk morning walk. He liked good coffee and the only game in which he was interested was chess with which he relaxed himself at

the Cosmopolitan Club where he was a regular visitor and of which he was the Secretary for three terms. A big sized portrait of his hangs in the library along with many other distinguished Presidents of the Club. He was a member of a joint family and he held his elder brother, Srinivasaraghava Iyengar, Inspector-General of Registration, Madras, and later Dewan of Baroda, in great esteem and greatly relied on his advice and judgment. He had two sons, K. Srinivasan and K. Gopalan who succeeded him as proprietors of *The Hindu* and three daughters. Although a fond father he did not have much time to be with them and the family was run by his efficient and loving wife. Of medium height and fair complexion, he dressed himself in a lace-bordered dhoti wound round the legs in the Hindu Brahmin style and had a long closed coat over it. He wore a striking turban and his caste-mark presenting the appearance and bearing of a man who would stand head and shoulders above any man in any company. He was a cosmopolitan in outlook and in his social relations. Although he came from an orthodox family he was not personally orthodox in the narrow sense of the term, nor was he crusader for social reform.

When he went to England as a member of the Editors' team, he wrote to his son, Srinivasan, whom he had left in charge of the paper, a letter which the latter treasured as a bible and disclosed at the time of the Golden Jubilee of *The Hindu*. "I have left a good lot of business matters for you to grapple with", the father wrote, "but don't worry yourself too much over them. Take as much counsel as you can and in all matters take the straightest and least devious paths possible and no harm will come to you". This sage advice has been the bedrock of the policy and principles pursued by *The Hindu* and there has been no deviation from it till today.

**A**S S. RANGASWAMI, Kasturiranga's nephew, took over as Editor of The Hindu and settled himself in the chair which his uncle had made so famous, news came of Gandhiji's serious illness in prison which sent shivers of shock throughout the country. On January 12, 1924, the Mahatma underwent an operation for appendicitis at the Sassoon Hospital in Poona and the news was flashed by The Hindu which wrote "The news of serious developments in connection with the health of the Mahatma has come with startling suddenness upon a public in no wise prepared for it". The Hindu praised the Government and said "It has certainly acted with a due sense of the tremendous responsibility that rested upon its shoulders and taken meticulous care that there was no room for reproach on the score of neglect. While so much may be generally acknowledged it cannot be gainsaid that the bitterness engendered by the incarceration of the Mahatma will be considerably intensified by the news of his serious illness".

The Hindu said: "To the intelligentsia of the country the Mahatma is a gifted leader of exceptional ability and courage. To the masses of India he is a God, the prophet of a new Gospel, the Gospel of love, service and sacrifice. Will the Government take heed in time and release the Mahatma unconditionally?"

The Hindu sent a special correspondent to Poona and he interviewed Col. Madock, Superintendent of the hospital, who performed the operation on Gandhiji. "Mahatmajī continues to be well and there is no cause for anxiety", he wrote. "He looks cheerful and fresh. Doctors who are attending on him, some of whom I have since met, agree that Mahatmajī is practically out of danger and they do not apprehend any complications setting in". Col. Madock told the correspondent that he was rather happy that morning and he was perfectly satisfied with the condition of the patient.

The Hindu published a detailed report of the operation from its Bombay correspondent. "After Col. Madock was summoned by the prison officials to examine Gandhiji", the Correspondent wrote, "the former decided after examining Gandhiji to remove him to the Sassoon Hospital forthwith. He for once discarded red tapism, put the Mahatma in his own car and removed him to the hospital. It appears that the Mahatma had to be carried on a stretcher, so great was the pain experienced by him and so weak he had become already. Of course, the operation had to be delayed slightly as the hospital authorities

were not prepared to take the entire responsibility on themselves. But time was pressing and Col. Madock was against delay."

The Correspondent said after certain formalities were gone through the operation was performed but half way the electric lights failed but ordinary lamps were brought and when the operation was completed the lights returned.

The Poona Correspondent wrote: "Public opinion here feels gratified at the bold act of Col. Madock who decided on the operation on his own authority and responsibility and who did perform the operation successfully without waiting to get into communication with the Surgeon-General and the Home Member of the Bombay Government and losing time thereby. It is widely believed that but for his boldness grave consequences would have followed. Devadas Gandhi in an interview said that he felt highly indebted to Col. Madock and his colleagues for performing the operation immediately. Their right diagnosis and expert surgical skill saved the life of Gandhiji."

The Hindu featured reports of Gandhiji's health and stories connected with the operation in a big way and also published reports speculating on his release. On January 19, it carried a double column story on the Leader Page with five headings beginning with "Mahatma improves. Pain in wound alleviated. Doctors' regard for his sentiment. To be released tomorrow? National prayers for recovery."

The Story began: "Our Special representative had dharsan of Mahatmaji this noon and wires out the statement of Srimathi Kasturba Gandhi to the country that there is no need for anxiety. Our Representative bears witness to the treatment of Mahatmaji in hospital so that there need be no cause for anxiety in the country. That he takes good nourishment will also be received with gladness by the country though his usual overcarefulness in the matter of diet is not interfered with by the medical men out of respect to his sentiment and desire. Our Bombay Correspondent refers to the persistent rumour that Mahatmaji will shortly be released."

On January 21, The Hindu Special Correspondent reported an interview with Gandhiji in the hospital. "He was sitting quite at ease on his bed", the Correspondent wrote, "and had just then taken some milk and barley water. I stood silently for a moment or two after which the Mahatma beckoned me to his side and asked if I had specially come from Madras. I replied in the affirmative and referred to the public anxiety regarding his health. Mahatmaji listened with a smile and made kind enquiries of The Hindu and its present Editor. He added he had heard of our late Editor's demise and desired to write but he could not do so as he was a prisoner. He asked about Kasturiranga Iyengar's illness and I gave him the information in as few words as possible. At this stage Kasturba came to his bedside and spoke a word or two to which he nodded assent. Mahatmaji talks low and slowly. He is very weak and appears not able to stand the effort of conversation. But he is in good cheer. It was time for me to leave. Before calling the nurse Mahatmaji told me, "Slept well last night, feel much better today".

Two readers wrote to The Hindu suggesting the presentation of a purse to Col. Madock who saved the life of Gandhiji. The Hindu published a two-column picture of Col. Madock and Dr. V. D. Phatak who also attended on Gandhiji.

Gandhiji was released on February 4, 1924 and The Hindu broadcast the news through leaflets and wall posters in the city and in mofussil centres through its agents

The Special Correspondent in Poona reported on February 5: "There was intense excitement in the Sassoon Hospital when the news came that Mahatmaji had been released. The news reached the hospital in this manner Mr C. F. Andrews had gone early to the hospital and had been laughing and joking with Mahatmaji as he usually does each morning since his return from England. Mahatmaji enjoyed this and they were there engaged together, when quite unexpectedly, Col Madock came in and said to Gandhiji. "I am so glad to see you looking so well this morning". Mahatmaji introduced Mr Andrews and they shook hands. Then Col. Madock said: "I am so glad to tell you that I have some very good news to give you and I wanted myself to be the first to bring it to you. The order came last night by special messenger and here it is. You are unconditionally released". The Mahatma remained entirely quiet and said to Col Madock: "I hope you will not mind my remaining your guest and your patient a little longer". The Colonel replied with a smile "I hope you will continue to obey all my instructions as a doctor". Mahatmaji promised to do so and thanked the Colonel for his exceeding kindness. The scene was one that was wonderful to witness. There was a complete absence of any excitement. Telegrams began to pour in almost immediately after the Colonel's visit and strangely enough the first came from Madras, from Mr G. A. Natesan".

As Gandhiji convalesced in Juhu, Bombay, he conferred with Swarajist leaders Das and Motilal Nehru in May, 1924. Statements were issued by both parties expressing their disagreement with each other's views but also noting points of agreement. While Gandhiji held council entry was not admissible within a policy of non-co-operation, C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru held council entry was a form of non-co-operation. The Hindu noted that as a result of the talks "the Swarajists are given the completest freedom to give their method the fullest scope of success while they on the other hand are charged with and agree to take upon themselves the responsibility for fulfilling the constructive programme in co-operation with the orthodox non-co-operators".

The Hindu said: "We wish to emphasise the chief elements in the re-orientation of the Swarajist policy. For one thing they have not given up obstruction; but they are no longer to be content with pursuing their goal along that blind alley. Their policy in future will be positive as well as negative, effective as well as demonstrative. They will as much assert their right to be heard and to rule as deny the claim of the bureaucracy to rule and be obeyed.... It will be the endeavour of the Swarajists inside the councils to enforce a species of self-determination for the people by deflecting through obstructive as well as constructive activities the course of action of the bureaucracy along channels calculated to forward the national policy at large".

But the controversy between the No Changers and the Swarajists did not quite end there and on the other hand it assumed a new dimension and threatened to split the Congress organisation itself when Gandhiji in a statement said that Swarajists should function as a party within the Congress and not as part of it and where they were not in a majority in the Congress executive bodies they should resign.

The Hindu was flooded with statements and views on the controversy and one of the contributors was S. Srinivasa Iyengar who sharply differed from Gandhiji in his view that the carrying out of the constructive programme and the triple boycott was all that was necessary. He said what was needed was a more dynamic programme and it meant support to the Swarajists. He added that Gandhiji wanted to be only leader of the "No Changers" and not of the Congress as a whole which included the Swarajists. Differences with Gandhiji were also expressed by Motilal Nehru who said Swarajists would continue to function as before.

Writing on the eve of the A.I.C.C. meeting at Ahmedabad, The Hindu posed the question: "In popular eyes the question may reduce itself to this form. Is Mahatma Gandhi to continue to be the leader of the Congress or not? Mahatma Gandhi's own writings have been calculated more to support the presentation of the issue in this false form than to prevent it. The conception of the present position in some quarters is something like this. Mahatma Gandhi will either lead the Congress or retire out of it. If he is allowed to do the former, the Swarajists have no option but to withdraw from the Congress altogether and start their own exclusive organisation independent of the Congress which means that in provinces like Bengal the Congress will be as good as non-existent. In other words the control of the Congress must necessarily pass either into the hands of Mahatma Gandhi exclusively or into the hands of Swarajists because Mahatma Gandhi will not care to have anything to do with an executive which does not wholly share his opinion as regards what the Congress non-co-operation policy is. In either case, what according to many people stares the country in the face is a serious split in the Congress, a split so serious that it will be almost fatal to the future of the Congress. The duty of the members of the A.I.C.C. at its next meeting is obvious. It is nothing less or nothing more than preventing such a split and preserving the essential unity of the Congress."

The Hindu sharply criticised Gandhiji when he gave notice of four resolutions to be moved at the A.I.C.C. meeting at Ahmedabad. One of the resolutions was to debar Swarajists from sitting on Congress executive bodies and another to make spinning khadi yarn by Congressmen compulsory. The Hindu asked whether in the present state of Congress politics "such drastic separation of the sheep from the goats as Mahatmaji proposes is likely best to conduce to the future well-being of the national organisation and added: "The Swarajists are there and too substantially there to be cursed or elbowed out of existence merely because they offended the "No Changers" sense of proprieties. They control more than one important province and if it comes to a straight fight between them and the "No Changers" on the basis of an impartial plebiscite, we should not like to speculate on the result as regards the rest of the provinces".

The Hindu noted that the Swarajists were unwilling to give up their council activities but were ready to support the constructive programme in such manner as possible. "The only question to determine is therefore whether the kind of cleansing contemplated by Mahatmaji is politically wise or — a belittlingly mundane word — expedient. In other words could the purging of the Congress — for the Congress executives are to a large extent synonymous with the Congress — leave in it sufficient prestige to continue to command

the respect in which it is now held not only by the masses but by its various opponents? That is of course not a consideration that would appeal to the Mahatma. He would rather be in the right with two or three than accept a dubious compromise. But those who regard the Congress as an indispensable institution and who are jealous for its prestige and influence may well be excused for thinking differently. They may reasonably argue that a national institution must not be made the monopoly of a party, even of a party of puritans in the best sense of the word."

The Hindu said "We see therefore in the proposals of the Mahatma potentialities of disaster for the Congress and for that essential unity which is the country's greatest need. It is unfortunate that the proposals he makes are not so much proposals as postulates for he appears to regard them as his minimum conditions for consenting to lead the national forces. He is a man of his word and means what he says even as to that condition which would exclude those lillies of the field who may toil but spin not their ten tolas of yarn a month. His alternative is presumably the setting up of a separate organisation of his own. The need for it and its advisability seem questionable. In any case it is unthinkable that the Congress can thrive or have any right to be called national if it gives itself to ritualistic intolerance and inquisitions such as would in actual practice attend the carrying out of his conditions elsewhere than in his immediate presence."

When at the A.I.C.C. meeting at Ahmedabad on June 28, 1924, Pandit Motilal Nehru's point of order that Gandhiji's resolutions were ultra vires of the Congress constitution was rejected by 82 votes to 68, The Hindu wrote. "The preliminary voting indicates that Mahatmajī has a majority of full 20 clear votes. In the light of this voting and failing to arrive at a satisfactory compromise the Swarajists, we learn, propose to offer the dictatorship of the Congress to Mahatma Gandhi. Rather than wage an unseemly and probably a losing battle they seem to prefer withdrawal from the field. We do not know what the ultimate outcome of the debate will be but we are frankly apprehensive of the proximate results of the 'No Changers' victory."

The Swarajists, led by Pandit Motilal Nehru walked out of the A.I.C.C. on June 29 when it adopted Gandhiji's resolution on compulsory spinning but the next day a compromise between Swarajist leaders and Gandhiji was reached which was hailed with satisfaction by The Hindu. It said the "compromise represents the only sane and sensible course. It speaks volumes for the statesmanship and amenability to reason of the Mahatma that he should so far have consented to recede from his original position for the sake of the larger interests of the country. He has realised that unity is a commodity for which if it is possible to pay too high a price it is well worth paying as high a price as one could afford to pay. And we must realise that the Mahatma has paid a price which might cost him some searchings of the heart".

A sidelight on the compulsory spinning controversy was an appeal in The Hindu by C. Rajagopalachari with the title 'Have you got your wheel ready? It read: "The 15th of August will indicate whether you want Gandhi to lead or not. You must prove your faith by sending your quota of yarn. Get a spinning wheel and spivars at once"

Unity was again brought about in the Congress by more concessions to Swarajists by Gandhiji. The Mahatma went to Calcutta in November 1924 after



successfully completing a self-imposed 21-day fast in Delhi to promote communal amity. In the meanwhile the Government of India promulgated an ordinance to deal with terrorist activities in Bengal and arrested over 75 political leaders including Subhas Bose. The Hindu called it "a serious and sinister development". After many hours of talk between Gandhi, C. R. Das and Motilal a joint manifesto was issued over their signatures which said the Congress should suspend the programme of non-co-operation as the national programme except in so far as it related to boycott of foreign cloth. The manifesto pleaded for following the constructive programme and for the Swarajists to continue their work in the Assembly and Provincial Legislatures as an integral part of the Congress organisation.

The Hindu welcomed the suspension of the non-co-operation programme. "We can understand what it must have cost the Mahatma to consent to the sacrifice but his practical wisdom has probably long ago recognised the necessity. But he does nothing by halves and his agreeing to the Swarajists acting in the name of and on behalf of the Congress is an instance in point. That is the reply of the Congress to the challenge of Lord Reading who would brand the Swarajists as revolutionaries, the inspirers and the defenders of anarchical crimes. No longer can the Swaraj party be isolated for ostracism and oppression. At the same time it must be pointed out this new gesture of the Mahatma imposes obligations on the Swarajist leaders of which no doubt they are perfectly conscious. If we understand the compromise aright it is a permit for political action. Political action will necessarily vary according to circumstances and it is incumbent on them to enlighten and to hearken to the voice of public opinion".

S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Swarajist leader, told The Hindu. "I believe the Government must have launched the repression in Bengal on the assumption that Mahatma Gandhi would stand aloof from the Swarajists. The answer given by Mahatma Gandhi jointly with the Swarajists by entering into the settlement embodied in the joint manifesto has left the Government without a hold in the country".

A. Rangaswami Iyengar said: "Mahatma Gandhi has offered to all political parties in the country a splendid opportunity of uniting in a common course of action that will lead eventually to that final stage in the struggle with the bureaucracy that is bound to achieve Swaraj as soon as possible".

The Swarajists had already made a striking impression in the Central Assembly before the developments which we have been narrating took place. The special correspondent of The Hindu reported their first entry into the Assembly on January 31, 1924 under the leadership of Pandit Motilal Nehru. "The Swarajists numbering 44 and led by Pandit Motilal Nehru took the oath for the first time", he wrote. "Pandit Motilal Nehru arrived in scrupulously clean Khaddar dress with Gandhi cap on, followed by about 10 members of the Swaraj party, mostly belonging to the United Provinces. His appearance in the Chamber was marked by a temporary silence in which every one envied the Pandit's eminence and prominence as head of His Majesty's Opposition. The officials were struck with wonder and looked at each other comparing their own dress with that of the Pandit's. Some of the moderates and Independents eager to talk to Pandit Motilal went forward and attempted to engage him in conversation but the opposition leader moved on unconcerned and took

his seat which was pointed out to him by a member of his party. Mr. M. A. Jinnah with his Bombay colleague, Sir P. Thakurdas in their splashing collars and ties sat in piquant contrast next to Mr. Vithalbhai Patel whose forehead shone amidst his lustrous beard and crowned by a Gandhi cap. Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal with no head dress smiled exhibiting his loss of teeth"

In an appeal to the Legislators to do their duty, *The Hindu* wrote. "There is no patriotic Indian today, who no matter whether he be moderate or independent or non-co-operator who does not stand for Swaraj. It follows from this that any Indian who directly or indirectly puts obstacles on the path of the nation's realisation of its objective does the greatest disservice he can to the country's cause. The other fact from which also no member of the Assembly, indeed no Indian for that matter, could escape is that our success will be proportionate to the unity with which we put forward our claims. The Moderate recognises this fact no less than the Swarajist. The need for joint action has never been so great in the history of the nation as today and it is a happy augury for the nation that the conditions for the success of such action are as favourable now as ever it has been. Most of the elected members of the Assembly cherish common aims and common ambitions for their country and from the bitterness of the common disappointment which Lord Reading's deliberately provocative pronouncement has provided the patriotic bond which binds them together may easily draw further cementing substance. In the circumstances the duty of the members of the Assembly is obvious. What the country demands of them now is, first to find the greatest common factor of agreement among themselves and then to declare that they solidly stand for it and by it. The united declaration of the common objective is a service which all parties can easily do to the country without giving up their particularist politics and programmes. The end declared each party may, if it must, set to go about its own way in obtaining it".

What *The Hindu* wanted was achieved in a way when at a conference of elected members of Indian legislatures in Delhi in February, 1924, under the presidentship of C. R. Das, agreement was reached on the national demand for Swaraj. The conference adopted a resolution moved by M. A. Jinnah asking the British Government to take steps immediately for the establishment of full responsible Government. Another resolution urged the appointment of a committee or for a round table conference of public men representing the various interests to recommend measures for establishing full responsible Government. *The Hindu* said the most important significance of the demand was that the country "is united in its wishes and so proclaiming provides an excellent justification for whatever peaceful and legitimate course the leaders might deem it necessary to pursue in consequence of the Government's action on the demand".

On February 19, 1924, the Indian Legislative Assembly by 76 votes against 49 carried Pandit Motilal Nehru's amendment to a non-official resolution on constitutional reforms. The amendment called for steps towards immediate self-government and the convening of a round table conference in this connection.

In a telegram to *The Hindu* from Delhi on his impressions of the debate A. Rangaswami Iyengar said anticipation by Special Correspondents in England and India of a new policy by the Labour Government (which had taken over

from the Tories) had proved false and "it became clear by yesterday that nothing more than eye washes were again going to be tried. But few were prepared for the practical unanimity with which the elected representatives of the people rejected such an eye wash as was offered by Sir Malcolm Hailey in a speech by no means seductive but peculiarly offensive at its close"

The Hindu said: "It is obvious that there is now no common meeting ground between the Nationalists and the Government. What the one is prepared to offer and what the other is prepared to accept are so far apart that it is sheer waste of breath to carry on negotiations that cannot possibly lead to anywhere. It would be interesting to know if the right wing of the Nationalist Party would act up to the course that it is pledged to take. If it does it would give the opportunity for the Premier to prove that if his earlier sympathy for Indian aspirations and the pledge of his party for Indian self-determination be things of no account he can at least live up to the expectations roused in the diehard circles by his famous message. Meanwhile it is all to the good that we know exactly where we stand. It is clear as the light of day that the time for waiting in the antechamber of British political parties has gone. One party will not, another party cannot, do justice to India. It is scant satisfaction to us to know that in happier circumstances Labour would have been ready to redeem the pledges to India. We have no sympathy with the argument that Labour is helpless. It will always remain helpless till it learns to grasp its nettles boldly instead of trying to efface the impression of immaturity of political wisdom in the past by craven pusillanimity in the present. If Labour wants to govern and not merely to vegetate we cannot imagine a worthier cause in which to fight and if necessary to face defeat than that of India. That however is Labour's own look out. What we are here concerned to point out is the supreme folly of imagining that we have merely to pass a resolution in an Assembly or sit round a table and draft a constitution for the acceptance of the British Cabinet to be readily accorded. However well intentioned the latter may be its inertia in respect of Indian affairs, its tendency to leave well alone and its fear of making bad worse, would require to overcome them a force that is irresistible. That force as Mahatmaji pointed out, can only come from a people who are determined in their demands and who by setting their own house in order are invulnerable and irresistible". True to the fears expressed by The Hindu the Secretary of State for India, Lord Olivier, in a statement in the House of Lords on February 27 rejected the demand for constitutional reforms and a round table conference.

We must now enlighten the reader on the reference in The Hindu editorial which we have quoted to Ramsay MacDonald's message.

The message was a world scoop for The Hindu and it was given by Ramsay MacDonald to St Nihal Singh, the paper's Special Correspondent in London, shortly before he assumed office as Prime Minister of the first Labour Government in Britain in February 1924.

In his message MacDonald said, "I watch sometimes with no little anxiety the progress of affairs in India. During all my political work I have anchored myself firmly upon the conviction that if progress is to be well rooted it can only be carried on by what is called political or constitutional ways. We have seen in our own generation all sorts of revolutionary movements which seemed to be successful and which have broken contacts with the past; but in the end after

much physical suffering and the creation of evil tempers and a vicious spirit they have had to return to pick up the contacts that had been broken and to apply the very principles they had rejected. I can see no hope in India if it becomes the arena of a struggle between constitutionalism and revolution. No party in Great Britain will be cowed by threats of force or by policies designed to bring Government to a standstill and if any sections in India are under the delusion that is not so, events will very sadly disappoint them. I would urge upon all the best friends of India to come nearer to us, to get at our reason and our goodwill. I deplore the evidence of a backward spirit in some sections here but let no one misread causes and effects. When an appeal is made to revolutionary methods, whether those methods are active force or passive force, a reaction towards the opposite extreme is bound to come and men and parties of the most sincere goodwill are hustled off the stage, while the two forms of reactions — that of the right and that of the left — kick and tear and sweat against each other until the failure of both has been demonstrated. I know that the approach and the good-will should be mutual. My appeal is therefore not only to Indians but to the British authorities as well."

The Hindu's only comment was that Mr. MacDonald "speaks in a tone which is scarcely recognisable as one proceeding from the Labour leader. Labour in office promises to be no more free from the "experiment" obsession than either of the other political parties and India has to depend for her salvation solely on herself. Or can it be that Mr. MacDonald affects the stern pose to disarm criticism from the right?"

MacDonald's Message to The Hindu caused a sensation in England, reported St Nihal Singh. "How did The Hindu get hold of it", was the question by everyone when a summary of it was flashed back from Bombay. Reuter of course did not lay himself out to be generous. How could he be generous when he had all the resources and yet an Indian newspaper had got the scoop? He therefore contented himself with cabling to Britain as short a message as possibly he could in the circumstances. But when the message reached Fleet Street everyone asked how The Hindu had managed Mr. MacDonald to talk to it exclusively on a subject upon which so many people in Britain as well as in India were vitally interested. It is a time honoured custom in Fleet Street to assume that a "Message" or "interview" which cannot be accounted for by the least imaginative person is a "fake" or at any rate to print it in such a manner as to leave room for repudiation of it. The Morning Post was one of the papers whose sub-editor pursued such tactics. "Premier's reported message to India" ran the headline under which Reuter's cable was printed. The mistrust was not of Reuter but of the Indian who secured and transmitted the message and of the Indian who printed it. The Daily Telegraph used the same headline in printing a similar telegram from its Allahabad Correspondent".

Nihal Singh then proceeded to give the message which Reuter had sent. "Simultaneously with the announcement of the Socialist Cabinet, there was published in The Hindu, a Madras daily, a message from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in which the Prime Minister pleads for reason and goodwill between India and Great Britain, and declares: "No party in Great Britain will be cowed by threats of force or by policies designed to bring Government to a stand-still and if any Indian sections are under the delusion that it is not so

events will sadly disappoint them" Nihal Singh said he was in Dublin when this truncated summary of the message appeared in the British Press and so he called the Dublin reporters and gave them the text of the message which two of the three papers printed and they made it clear that the message was given by Mr. MacDonald in response to Mr Nihal Singh's request before he took office. The British papers later printed the text of the message with the heading: "Text of Mr MacDonald's message to India issued by Reuter".

Frustrated by the attitude of the British Government to the demand for Responsible Government, the Swarajists in the Central Assembly combining with the Independents (together they were called the Nationalist Party) on March 10, 1924 refused supplies to Government on major demands for grants like customs, salt, income-tax and opium. Pandit Motilal Nehru said: "My grievance is not against this or that branch of the administration but against the entire administration of the Government of India. The reason is the very unsatisfactory and disappointing nature of the response made by the Government to the resolution passed by the majority on the subject of establishing responsible Government in India. I know the grant will be restored and that we shall be knocking our heads in vain against Treasury Gates but this is the strongest form of protest".

The Hindu said the Swarajist action would go down in history as a memorable event. "Whatever else it was not it was certainly an act of patriotic courage".

Almost a week later the Swarajists followed up their triumph by throwing out the entire Finance Bill and throwing it out again when it was reintroduced with the Viceroy's recommendation for reconsideration. The Special Correspondent in Delhi who reported the rejection of the bill on two occasions revealed that the advice to the Swarajists to reject the bill as a whole instead of making the House divide on every item of taxation was given by Srinivasa Sastri. "It is a striking landmark in the fight for self-government but the champions of the popular cause in the Assembly should not forget that it is no more than a landmark", said The Hindu which asked the question, "what next?" It said that the Swarajists must realise that the "Assembly is no suitable field of action for those who believe in and stand for great things and real freedom. In any case we think it is time for them to realise that whatever its initial effects pure obstruction if persisted in will prove itself no better than a blind alley which leads them nowhere".

The second week of May saw a number of prominent Indian Moderates including Mrs Besant, Srinivasa Sastri and Lajpat Raj in London and their object was stated to be to campaign for further reforms and that they had met the Premier and the Secretary of State for India. The Hindu which was not hopeful of these efforts wrote "The Indian public if it takes the news at all seriously will do so with a feeling of sadness for the tragedy of ineradicable obsessions, for the tenacity with which these politicians cling to their faith in deputations, must indeed be deemed tragic. The futility of this expedient so far as justice for India is concerned has been demonstrated to us often enough. That a Labour Government is in office does not create a fresh reason for persisting in this fatuity for Labour in the past four months has shown how facilely it can accommodate itself to the anti-Indian point of view. India has had the bitter lesson forced down her throat that she cannot depend any more

on the promises of the Labour party than on those of the Liberals or Conservatives. The Labour Cabinet, if it has done anything, has merely surrendered to the bureaucracy in India why then do our Moderate friends cling so unctuously to prayerful deputations? The magnificent optimism of the Moderate has always been one of the piquant but inexplicable ironies of Indian politics but at the present hour the policy of deputation does not cease with simply being fatuous but becomes to some extent mischievous"

The Hindu noted in a tribute to Edwin Montagu, former Secretary of State for India, on his death in November 1924, that even he a great friend of India could not achieve all that he set out to do for this country. "He enunciated excellent principles of constitutional reform, most of them unexceptionable and even beautiful while they remained in the realm of theories and judging by his speeches alone, there was perhaps no greater champion of constitutional freedom for India than he"

The Hindu said "Mr. Montagu was a great and undoubted friend of India His advocacy secured for a time for India a status superior to that of a mere dependency. He was instrumental in admitting Indians into the inner councils of the Empire and if his efforts lacked solidity and permanency it must be conceded that he is not wholly to blame . There have been many 'friends of India' whose claim to that title rests on far less substantial foundations than Mr. Montagu's and India always grateful to those who serve her will cherish the memory of one who had so much vision and whose devotion to her interests was so entirely whole-hearted".

In contrast to Montagu was Lord Willingdon, Governor of Madras, who The Hindu said felt his role "to be that of a constitutional monarch after the British pattern" The Hindu which made an inquest on his administration of Madras on the eve of his laying down office spoke of his personal foibles "which may be trivial but are of some importance as showing Lord Willingdon's conception of the nature of his task. One is a fondness or deliberate and calculated fondness for display. The many state drives, the little red lights and flags on Government House cars to intimate to an inquiring public the presence of His, Her or Their Excellencies, the red beacon lights on top of Government House like watchful eyes that reassure sleeping Madras, the issue of detailed communiques about the engagements of Their Excellencies after the fashion of court circulars, all these convey the impression, not of the simplicity of a democratic Governor but the divinity that hedges a high well-born German Prince. When he condescends it is difficult to resist the suspicion that he does so with some effort and with an eye to dramatic effort".

The Hindu said: "Lord Willingdon in short felt his role to be that of a constitutional monarch after the British pattern. He would reign but not administer. That we think explains why he is so fond of the external trappings of his office and so casual about his responsibilities. . . . He would not himself look into the grievances of the public nor did he relish others effectively bringing them to his notice. He proved himself to be a fanatical upholder of the theory that the King can do no wrong; and what was the Governor of a province if not a King".

How true the judgment of The Hindu on this satrap was became clear when Lord Willingdon came back to India as Viceroy many years later and was responsible for the worst repressive regime in the history of British rule.

In 1928, when The Hindu celebrated its Golden Jubilee, Lord Willingdon, who was then Governor-General of Canada, sent a message in his own hand to A Rangaswami Iyengar, Editor. "I am very grateful to you", Lord Willingdon wrote; "for giving me the opportunity of sending my congratulations I have some recollection that while I lived in Madras those who were responsible for The Hindu and I were often in disagreement on matters of policy and administration. But that recollection doesn't in any way prevent my sending you warmest good wishes and hopes that in the future your powerful guidance may always be in the best interests of India and the British Empire."

An important development in Indian politics was the All Parties Conference convened in Bombay on November 21, 1924 which unanimously reiterated India's demand for self-Government. The Hindu's Bombay Correspondent described the conference thus: "A political gathering more representative of all parties, communities and interests in India than the one that assembled on Friday in Bombay is unthinkable. There was an array of renowned politicians like Pandit Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, V. J. Patel, Srinivasa Sastri, Chintamani, Jinnah and Mrs. Besant that would have done honour to any parliamentary assembly in the world. The legal profession was represented by Mr. Bhulabhai Desai and Mr. Chakranti Munshi. There were orators like Mr. B. C. Pal, Mr. Sathyamurti and Mr. Jayakar. In Mr. Mahomed Ali, Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Mr. S. A. Brelvi, and Mr. Pothan Joseph, there was the journalist talent of India. The business community of India was represented by Sir D. Petit, Sir Purushothamdas Thakurdas and Mr. P. C. Sethna. Among half a dozen European visitors a lady, Prof. Mohan Stine and Mr. Pickthall were conspicuous."

"But above all this was the quiet unassuming half-naked figure of the Mahatma sitting in lustrous demeanour lending inspiration to the proceedings by his gentle smile. Everybody seemed to realise that it was his will-power that had made antagonistic warring political elements gravitate to one hall to forge new weapons to fight the bureaucracy with and to accelerate the day of India's salvation. What else would make possible the rare phenomenon of Mr. Das, Mrs. Besant, Mr. Patel and Mr. Jinnah meeting on one platform and putting their heads together to discover the way to fight the fresh tactics adopted by the bureaucracy?"

The Correspondent reported that Gandhiji moved the first resolution proposing the formation of a committee to draft a resolution on the Bengal ordinance. The committee's resolution condemning the ordinance was later passed by the conference. Gandhiji then moved another resolution seeking to appoint a committee of leaders belonging to all parties "to consider the best way of reuniting all political parties in the Indian National Congress and to prepare a scheme of Swaraj including the solution of Hindu-Muslim and like questions in their political aspects." The resolution was passed after a debate.

The Correspondent said the capital achievement of the conference was the fact that it "demonstrated in an unmistakable way that India is a united nation and when oppressed by the bureaucracy beyond a certain degree Indians forget their petty differences and present a solid front to the foreign power".

The Hindu commented: "The conference went off very well and had contributed a substantial first step towards the achievement of national unity. For this result the resolve of all parties — Congress, Liberals, Besantites and Non-Brahmins — to place patriotism before party has been responsible. That

has opened a vista of glorious possibilities and it is the sacred duty of all parties to see that the atmosphere of the conference also permeates their everyday political life for it is in that crucible that the pious resolves of moments of exaltation are put to their most searching test"

It is interesting to know what Mr Jinnah's political thinking was during this period since he occupied the political stage so much in the later crucial years of India's struggle for freedom. In an interview to *The Hindu* in Bombay in November 1924, Mr Jinnah said: "What we want if ever we are able to take effective corporate action, which is after all the object of the Congress, is a thorough well disciplined organisation and mobilisation of politically minded people in India and it must be done purely on political lines and as far as possible religion should be separated from politics. Then alone is it possible for Hindus and Muslims and other communities and for classes and masses to work together with one sole burning feeling of patriotism".

The cleavage between *The Hindu* and Sir C. Sankaran Nair which started when the latter denounced Gandhiji at the Bombay conference of leaders in 1922 widened when in May, 1924 during his examination in the libel case in London filed against him by Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Sir Sankaran said the statement in *The Hindu* that he asked the National Congress for assistance in this case was a libel and he was going to file a suit when the Editor died. An editorial note under the news said "The article referred to above was written in August 1922 and Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar the late Editor died on December 12, 1923".

What *The Hindu* had written in 1922 was: "We understand that Sir Sankaran Nair has appealed to the Congress leaders to help him in the matter of his defence in the suit for damages filed against him by Sir Michael O'Dwyer. As the issues in the case are not personal to Sir Sankaran Nair but of peculiar interest to the whole country we have no doubt that the "help" will be rendered all the more heartily from a laudable desire to heap coals of fire on the head of one whose latter day performances these same leaders have no reason to look upon with any overwhelming access of gratitude. The Congress has had many enemies but by none has its activities been more virulently denounced and the motives of its leaders more malignantly misrepresented than by Sir Sankaran Nair. However the whirligig of time brings its revenges and if at one time a common hatred brought Sir Michael and Sir Sankaran to share the same niche in the Saints Gallery of the reactionaries it is not surprising that another turn of the wheel should witness these rival aspirants for apotheosis at uncanonical loggerheads and that one of them should seek aid in the fight from once despised and most comprehensively damned agencies. It is to be hoped however that this aspect of the matter would not be too obsessive".

*The Hindu* gave extensive coverage to the proceedings of the case, the reports sometimes being almost verbatim. In the case which arose out of a book, "Gandhi and anarchy" written by Sir Sankaran Nair attacking Gandhiji and the Congress and in which there was reference to Sir Michael O'Dwyer considered defamatory, the jury brought a verdict against Sir Sankaran Nair and Justice McCardie agreed. The plaintiff, Sir Michael O'Dwyer was awarded damages for £ 500 and also costs. The Judge made remarks in his summing up which were controversial and created a political sensation. The Judge



expressed the deliberate view that General Dyer acted rightly (when he ordered the shooting at Jallianwalabagh) under grave and exceptionable circumstances and was wrongly punished by the Secretary of State.

The Hindu called the trial a "hideous mockery" and said "Almost from the very day in which the trial commenced it was apparent that Sir Sankaran Nair had lost the case. Mr. Justice McCardie at every stage intervened to cross-examine witnesses and the defence counsel in favour of the plaintiff. Indeed so mephitic was the atmosphere of prejudice that it seemed a wonder that the defendant's counsel did not throw up his brief in disgust, leaving the judge and jury to do what they pleased. In his infinite optimism — or is it faith in British justice? — Sir Sankaran Nair persisted in proceeding with his defence"

The Hindu pointed out certain "faulty steps" on the part of the defence. "Sir Sankaran Nair ought to have known that it was not a straight fight that he was called upon to engage himself in. With the lesson of Tilak vs. Chiroi before him he ought to have refused to enter any defence at all. When later the lesson was being repeated in the attitude of the judge he should have withdrawn his defence altogether. Nor were these the only blunders on the part of the defence. Sir Sankaran Nair's act in expunging certain alleged defamatory portions in the second edition of the book was an act of misplaced generosity which the plaintiff and the judge fully exploited to his disadvantage. Nor can that part of his evidence in which he exhibited himself as a strong champion of the Government and indeed as their honorary pamphleteer in their campaign against Mahatma Gandhi be said to redound to his credit"

The Hindu added "The case has only served to demonstrate once again that when there is the slightest touch of politics involved for an Indian justice cannot be expected in an English Court and from an English jury. In such cases both judge and jury become weighted with the cares of empire. No wonder a case which was meant to test whether Sir Michael O' Dwyer was guilty of terrorism resulted in the finding, altogether gratuitous that O' Dwyer saved the Empire, that justice was not done to Dyer who is now made a martyr to political exigencies, that the whole galaxy of politicians, statesmen and judges who previously dealt with their responsibility after prolonged inquiry and prejudiced in favour of the officials concerned were all wrong and that it was left to Mr. Justice McCardie in the course of a comparatively lightning trial, with altogether no other materials before him than that of the interested evidence of O'Dwyer and his friends, to pronounce that the decimation of thousands simply to create an impression does not constitute terrorism and that Sir Michael O' Dwyer and Gen. Dyer were virtually the saviours of India".

The Vaikom Satyagraha which hit the headlines in The Hindu in April 1924 was a campaign in a small town in the then Travancore state organised to establish the right of the untouchables to walk on public roads. It had the support of leading Congressmen in Madras many of whom like E. V. Ramaswami Naicker and S. Srinivasa Iyengar led the Satyagrahis in Vaikom and sent volunteers from the towns of Madras presidency. The Hindu called the denial of right to untouchables a "monstrous custom, which whatever its origin has now become a travesty of our sublime religious truths and a disgrace as well as a danger to society". It added: "The Vaikom satyagrahis are out to establish an ordinary and elementary social right enjoyed by every non-Hindu and even

animals. It is not their object to embarrass the Travancore Government or to defy lawful authority".

The Hindu gave full coverage to the campaign reports of which occupied many columns. The Hindu's Vaikom Correspondent gave this report of the daily Satyagraha: "The Congress Satyagraha camp situated over a mile away from the landing place is a scene of liveliness at all times of the day and night. The camp is now under the able management of Mr. Kuroor Nilakanta Namboodripad who gives his careful attention to all details such as the enlistment and training of the volunteers, the accommodation of visitors etc. The volunteers are marching daily in relays every four hours to the four gates (of the temple) and offering satyagraha in the prohibited area. As they march they sing national songs, the most favourite among them being, Bharati's songs. The police have now put up a barricade on the western road which is the widest of the four (prohibited) roads. It would appear the barricade has been necessitated to relieve the pressure on the police in the event of the volunteers trying to push their way forward".

The untouchables of Vaikom ultimately won their struggle but not without a stiff fight and ordeal. Gandhiji visited Vaikom in March 1925 and expressed his sympathy with the Satyagrahis. He met the Maharani Regent of Travancore and also the leader of the Untouchables Swami Narayana Guru in connection with the Satyagraha. That even he was not immune to the customs and regulations of Travancore temples became evident when Gandhiji visited Kanyakumari (then in Travancore state). He walked to land's end at the confluence of the three seas. As he stood watching, a huge wave drenched him to the skin and he smilingly observed that the Goddess of the sea gave him a very wet reception. He then walked round the temple and as he was getting into its high courtyard he was told that entry into the temple was forbidden to people who had crossed the seas. Gandhiji said he would not budge an inch beyond the spot which was out of bounds for foreign returned people. He worshipped the deity from near the flag staff of the temple.

**T**HE HINDU in 1925 was a vastly improved newspaper both in its appearance and contents. For the first time sports news found a page for itself and as days went by this feature became popular for its volume and quality. A books page, titled "Literature, Art and Philosophy" was introduced on Saturdays which was the forerunner of the Literary Supplement which became well known in literary circles. The printing was better and type faces were changed for the better too making it easier for the reader to go through the paper. Foreign news was given in abundance and it was considerably augmented by a special service of cabled stories supplementing Reuter. The copyright service, it was announced, would be comprehensive covering every branch of news, special attention being paid to Indian affairs.

In February, The Hindu ran the first of a series of articles by St. Nihal Singh, whose name is already familiar to readers of this chronicle, on impressions of the imperial race. Introducing the articles, The Hindu said stay at home Indians would for the first time be able to obtain a glimpse of the life which our rulers lead "at home". "He proposes to describe for the benefit of our readers, all British classes from the lowest to the highest, leaving no strata of British society untouched. To few Indians has been given the opportunity of observing British life from the inside as to the author of these articles who for many years has been one of the most prominent journalists in Fleet Street". The articles were illustrated by pictures taken by St. Nihal Singh himself.

The Hindu also began publishing in April a series of articles on Indians in South Africa by Rev C F Andrews who was to be a frequent contributor to the paper in the years to come.

The Hindu was perhaps more interested in crime stories than it did in later years. In any case it is on record that it covered extensively the day to day proceedings of the Mumtaz Begum (the famous singer) case in Bombay in which her paramour Abdul Kadar Bawla was murdered and Mumtaz injured by agents of the Maharaja of Indore whose mistress she was previously. On the first day of the trial the telegraphic story occupied more than five columns.

Space apparently was no consideration in those days. The Hindu reproduced on April 17, 1925 an article by T.P.O' Connor in the Daily Telegraph, London, on Lord Curzon running to 10 columns.

The Special Correspondent of the paper in Delhi provided excellent reports of the debates in the Central Assembly and discussions in party enclaves. The Hindu published normally 12 pages on week days with 24 and sometimes even 28 on Saturdays. It had 16 pages also on week days.

The letters to the Editor column as always provided good reading. Here is a sample: In reply to a reader who had asked if Nandanar, the famous untouchable who became a Hindu saint, was a real person or a fictional character appearing in Gopalakrishna Bharati's opera, another reader wrote that Nandanar was a fictional character and there was no one like him in real life. Contradicting this an Englishman, Francis Kingsbury, who quoted Tamil texts to support his view wrote on March 21, 1925 that the story of Nandanar was not fiction and Nandanar lived very much earlier than Gopalakrishna Bharati's opera. He added that Nandanar was one of the 63 Saivite saints whose praises are sung in the Peria Puranam of Chekkilar who flourished in the first half of the 12th century.

The Hindu gave a varied fare to its readers. In March and April it carried full reports of the lectures delivered by Mr. Justice V. Ramesham of the Madras High Court on dietetics in which he made many unconventional suggestions regarding food. One of his firm beliefs was that coffee and tea were poisonous drugs. They might not be so intense a poison as arsenic, he said but were such as to undermine the human system slowly and gradually in the course of one or two generations.

The Hindu as usual was the envy of less successful and efficient journals and had to reply to their charge of unfairness etc. On March 9 it published a 12 page supplement carrying the full text of the report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee headed by Sir Alexander Muddiman, Home Member of the Government of India and apparently scooped over its rival, the Swarajya. The Swarajya complained that by sending copies of its supplement in advance to mofussil areas so as to ensure its simultaneous publication in Madras and the districts, The Hindu contravened the news agency's embargo that it should not be used in Dak (Mofussil) editions on the specified date. The Hindu said: "We appear to have an unhappy knack of incurring the displeasure of our local contemporaries, though since we are not in the habit of making conscious efforts in that direction, we can only bewail the fact without feeling it necessary to apologise for our existence. It was only the other day that certain criticisms we passed upon the record of the Madras Ministers drew down upon our devoted head a mass of vituperative verbiage from which we were able to disentangle the conclusion that added to our sins of envy, malice and uncharitableness the unforgiveable sin of Brahminism made the indictment complete and crushing. From another quarter by way of a little fraternal chastening comes a little lesson in journalistic propriety. The head and front of our offending is our having sent out the special supplement containing almost the whole of the Muddiman committee report so as to ensure its publication in the mofussil on the same day as in Madras. The contemporary in question was inhibited by its sense of the proprieties from adopting a similar course because the A.P.I. requested that the report should not be published in Dak editions. The injunctions of the A.P.I. are not the laws of the Medes and Persians and its only ground of reasonable complaint lies in the event of premature publication. The A.P.I. cannot complain but ought on

the other hand to be glad if we interpreted the instructions as did, for instance, the Times of India, so as to 'permit of our mofussil readers getting their news simultaneously with those in Madras'. It is rather absurd in the circumstances to talk of journalistic propriety. There was no desire to steal a march on our contemporaries by questionable means and while we are sorry that readers of the journal from whom this characteristic bit of querulousness emanates have been at a disadvantage, we must point out that its martyrdom must be ascribed to other things journalistic than a nicely balanced sense of humour or of the proprieties"

A social reform question which figured in the columns of *The Hindu* in April, 1925, was the controversy over the functioning of the Tamil Gurukula Vidyalaya at Shermadevi in Tinnevely District conducted by V. V. S. Aiyer, one-time revolutionary and associate of Bharati Dr Varadarajulu Naidu and other non-Brahmin leaders had objected to non-Brahmin boys of the institution being asked to take their meals separately. The matter went to Gandhiji who advised interdining but employment of Brahmin cooks. Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu was not satisfied with this arrangement as he did not like the condition about employing Brahmin cooks. He asked for the return of moneys subscribed to the funds of the Gurukula. In a letter published in *The Hindu* on April 15, V. V. S. Aiyer said that except in the case of two Brahmin boys in the case of all other Brahmin and non-Brahmin students there was common dining, and he made it clear that no Brahmin taken into the Gurukula thereafter would be given any exemption from the general mess. Speaking at a public meeting at Salem, E. V. Ramaswami Naicker said they must settle the Brahmin question even while the British supremacy lasted, otherwise they would have to suffer under the tyranny of what he called "Brahmnocracy". On April 21, V. V. S. Aiyer announced in *The Hindu* his resignation as head of the Gurukula. He said his opponents seemed to have developed a special hatred against him and in order to make it easier for other members of the Ashram to negotiate with them he would step down from his post.

Commenting on the controversy, *The Hindu* wrote "We hope that the suicidal and unsavoury disputation would be brought to a speedy termination by the adoption on both sides of a policy of give and take, remembering that social questions cannot be settled satisfactorily either by cowardly running away from them or by thrusting changes down the throats of unwilling people". On April 28 the Ashramites of the Gurukulam elected T. R. Mahadeva Aiyer as the new head of the Ashram in place of V. V. S. Aiyer. The controversy was one of the contributing factors for E. V. Ramaswami Naicker drifting away from the Congress and later forming an organisation of his own whose avowed objective was to eliminate Brahmins and Brahmin influence in Tamil Nad which it wanted to secede from India.

The leader of the Justice Party, Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetty, who also led a Non-Brahmin movement did not go so far in his attitude to Brahmins. In a speech reported by *The Hindu* he said: "The principle with which we began the movement was not the hatred of the Brahmin but the raising of the Non-Brahmin community. I say there is no difference between us and the Brahmins". He then quoted what he said some years ago "Don't vote for a political Brahmin and not the Brahmin as such. We have no complaint against

Brahmins They are always our friends Our fight is against the political Brahmin who it is that is keeping us down and crushing us to death"

When Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetty died on April 28, 1925, *The Hindu* paid him a rich tribute: "The public of the province have today to mourn the loss of an earnest citizen, a zealous worker, an uncompromising fighter, who for more than 40 years ably served the city and his country according to the light vouchsafed to him . . . Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetty was a man of strong views and strong convictions and he never believed in hiding his opinions in a cloud of sweet words and soft sentiments. He was known to be an orthodox Hindu for a long time but when the Non-Brahmin movement was started in the days of Lord Pentland he threw himself with characteristic energy into the work of what was called the release of the Non-Brahmin from Brahmin autocracy

The time for a final estimate of that movement is not yet but one cannot attribute to sheer wrong headedness an upheaval which commanded adherence even among seasoned political veterans who were trained in the Congress school of politics. When time has cooled our strong but transient feelings, when a truer perspective is opened out, when the march of events has all but buried the bitterness and ill-feeling engendered by a fierce quarrel, it may perhaps be found that if separatism was elevated to a principle of political action, it was done because the accumulated grievances of centuries had rendered it inevitable. If one notices signs of reaction one may well infer that the desired awakening has left its mark on the body politic and thus served its purpose. For no movement can thrive on hatred alone and the political orientation of the new party has tended steadily to live down its earlier crudities and to establish its place among the factors of national regeneration. In all this tremendous revolution in the province Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetty played a prominent part and he gave no quarter to his opponents . . . . In him the non-Brahmin movement has lost an authoritative and almost autocratic leader whose place it will be difficult to fill, the public a sincere and honest citizen whose work if it has not been spectacular has yet been of a solid worth"

The Hindu crossed swords with Gandhiji in March, 1925, when while unveiling a portrait of the late Kasturiranga Iyengar at The Hindu office he made certain observations which were later commented upon by *The Hindu* in a critical spirit. Gandhiji had said: "I never thought that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was an out and out reformer but he had cultivated journalism for the sake of journalism as it appeared to him. He felt that if he was to retain that character he must not lead the country too much but always accurately reflect its opinion. Those who followed the columns of *The Hindu* cannot fail to recognise that whenever they saw a change in the editorial policy, it was because with an unerring instinct he recognised which way the country was going or which way the wind was blowing. It may be said this was a defect in him but I do not consider it to be so. If he had taken upon himself, as I venture to say I have, the role of a reformer, then he would have to give expression to his own opinion no matter what the whole country about him thought of it. I think that also is a phase in the country's life, but that is not the peculiar function of a journalist. A journalist's peculiar function is to read the mind of the country and to give definite and fearless expression to that mind. And I think that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was almost unrivalled in this quality of his". In a fine tribute to *The Hindu* Gandhiji said: "I regard

The Hindu among the very few newspapers — very few daily newspapers — without which really you cannot do. It has acquired a prestige which is all its own”

Taking issue with Gandhiji, in his estimate of Kasturiranga Iyengar, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, who presided on the occasion, said he ventured to think that Kasturiranga aimed at even a higher ideal than what Gandhiji had mentioned. I can well recall instances when he did not fear even to go against the judgment of the public when he considered the judgment was wrong. I am not prepared to admit that the highest ideals of a journalist and of a public leader can be allowed to differ. They are just the same. They function, it may be, in different spheres but no man, not even a successful and highly popular journalist has the right to hide the light that has been vouchsafed to him for the benefit of his community”.

The Hindu's comment on Gandhiji's views was: “It has been his (Kasturiranga Iyengar) lot in the performance of his daily function often to fall foul of those whom he would rather compliment than criticise and a certain tenderness of skin that is a characteristic of our politicians has led to resentment at his criticism. Time and reflection, however, have invariably smoothed over such transitory irritations and it came to be generally recognised that while he did not claim infallibility for his criticisms he was honestly and fearlessly discharging a duty. Is it too much to hope that more of this largehearted charity that refuses to think the worst of a critic may be imported into our work-a-day politics? To put one's heart and soul into a fight does not necessarily imply mortgaging those assets to the demon of uncharitableness”

The Hindu referred to Gandhiji's remarks and said: “As he pointed out the journalist has to perform the double duty of reflecting and guiding public opinion. May we add that he also has to weigh many points of view — a necessity that does not always hamper either the politician or the prophet? It is natural, therefore, to mistake his caution for pusillanimity and his tardiness in passing judgments for a unholy desire to avoid the society of minorities. It is equally easy for the more unthinking people to ascribe a weathercock mentality as the source of a modification of a journal's policy. But politics are not immutable and degenerate into paper programmes if they are not suited to the changing moods of public opinion. Nor is consistency any more easy to practise in the journalistic world than in the political. We are constrained to this apologia because we feel that the virtue of single mindedness may also be devoted to other loyalties than the passing political programme of the moment; and merely because our values differ we cannot accept for the journalist a function less elevating, less noble, less dignified, and above all less patriotic than that of others ministering to the nation's needs”.

When the Central Assembly on March 14, 1925 rejected the demand for grant for the Executive Council on a motion by Pandit Motilal Nehru, The Hindu was critical of the attitude of the Indian members of the Executive Council who it thought, should have resigned when their policy was not supported and when their actions as members of the Government were denounced. “Though they are not constitutionally responsible to the legislature in the strict sense of the term, the spirit of the reforms required that they should act as if they were amenable to them if self-respect, devotion to public cause and the sense of reality had to be developed. . . . Little did they seem to realise that they are co-operating with a Government who have repeatedly flouted public opinion,

forged fresh fetters on the people and treated the resolutions of the Assembly as no more than scraps of paper. The Indian members some of whom had won popular plaudits when they criticised the Government for the very things which they are now tacitly conniving at, prove by their contemptible attitude how illusory is the benefit supposed to have been conferred on the people of closely associating Indians with the every day administration of the country."

In the following month, *The Hindu* commented on reports that the British Government might announce the appointment of a statutory commission to go into the question of further constitutional reforms and said that the only "possible solution is to summon a constituent assembly for the purpose of evolving a constitution. The sum and substance of the demand of the Assembly from which no departure has been made so far as we are aware, is that India should decide upon the kind of Government which she should have and the object of a round table conference is to discuss the way in which the principle of self-determination is to be applied."

No commission, royal or otherwise can possibly possess the authority, much less the influence of a representative body such as that proposed and it is a waste of time and effort to devise a plan which is not at all likely to be acceptable to those parties in the country which really count".

*The Hindu* said "racial arrogance and anxiety for vested interests can nowhere hold down a subject people in perpetual bondage and the English nation would be wise in realising that the safest course now for the Empire is that which would give the largest measure of liberty to India."

Meanwhile *The Hindu* urged the Liberals to rejoin the Congress in order to enforce the national demand. "A living entity they can never be", it said, "if they stand apart". *The Liberals*, *The Hindu* said, "must join the National Congress and cease to care to please the bureaucracy and its watchdogs of the diehard press for it must be within their experience that while the latter readily welcome whatever they do to discredit the Congress and lower the national demands, all their suggestions for constitutional progress are contemptuously treated and thrown on the scrap heap. We have never disguised our opinion about the necessity for making it easy for all parties to join the Congress... We do not think the chances of united action are fewer today than they were before they left the Congress for given the will to unite at whatever sacrifice, the consummation is sure to be achieved. A coalition outside the Congress has no chance of securing public support while a common platform could surely be erected which all parties could utilise for the advancement of the national cause".

In March, 1926, the Congress decided that the Swarajists in the Provincial Councils and the Central Assembly should come out as a protest against the British Government's attitude to the National demand. *The Hindu* said: "The long drawn battle for Indian self-determination has now reached a crisis". The paper noted that the British response to India's demand had amounted to "nothing more than a studied, calculated insult to the nation and to self-respecting people there is open no other course but the one prescribed by the experience of countries similarly situated, of organising the electorate for resisting all those activities of the authority in power designed to obstruct national progress and as a logical consequence to refuse supplies".



When Lord Reading, the Viceroy, laid down his office, in March, 1926, The Hindu heaved a sigh of relief. "We may say at once that India does not heave one sigh of regret at his departure, that he is leaving her shores unhonoured, unwept and unsung and that though she has no particular reason to be enthusiastic over his successor there is nevertheless a widespread feeling of relief that a tenure of office which has been one of lost opportunities, of unparalleled repression, of the prostitution of law, has drawn to a close. The greatest blunder which he committed, one which his successor if he is wise would do well to avoid in the interests of his own reputation and of both countries, is his failure to enlist the services of Indians of experience and undoubted patriotism, notably of that pure and noble soul, Mahatma Gandhi, in the cause of India's progress. The Viceroy courted an ignominious failure by underrating Mahatma's influence and hold on his countrymen. By persisting in that folly he has destroyed India's faith in British intentions and professions and by ignoring the united demand of a proud people throbbing anew with national consciousness he has dealt a serious blow at the prestige of his country the credit of which with the Indian public is very very low indeed at the moment"

On the eve of the elections to the Central Assembly and Madras Legislative Council in November, 1926, The Hindu carried on a raging campaign in support of the Congress candidates and featured a seven-column story with a banner heading "Call of the Congress Leaders' appeal to voters".

The Hindu wrote "On Monday (November 8) India expects every voter to do his duty by the Congress. United we stand, divided we fall, is a trite saying but true. Now that the bureaucracy has thrown aside all masks and plainly gloats over the disunion in the country, national self-respect demands that petty differences should be forgotten and the will to united action should again be mobilised as it was in 1922. The Swarajist policy in the Councils has never had a fair trial hitherto for except in one province the essential condition of a Swarajist majority has been lacking. It therefore becomes the primary duty of the electorate to return them in such thumping majorities in every province and in the legislative Assembly that the Government will have no opportunity to play off one party against another and will be forced to choose between the graceful fulfilment of the national demand and a universal uncompromising resistance about the ultimate issue of which there can be no doubt. In the final struggle between the bureaucracy and the nation which seems inevitable there cannot be any passive spectators, any neutrals aloof from the fray. Those who are not with us are against us. Hence it is the defeat of the Justice Party in our own Presidency has become a sacred duty".

The Congress swept the polls in the elections in November to the Madras Council and the Assembly and The Hindu wrote "The nemesis has come. The great body of non-Brahmins in this presidency have demonstrated their whole-hearted repudiation of communalism as a political principle and the Congress has come out triumphant. The remarkable success of Congressmen and the complete breakdown of the Justice Party can be accounted for by three causes. One is the reaction caused by the promotion of communal ill will, gross misuse of power and patronage and political jobbery perpetrated by the party in office during six long years. The second is the influence of the

Congress which stands for all that is patriotic, national and noble in the country. The third but by no means the least important is the splendid lead, the strenuous labours, the self-sacrificing zeal, the highminded devotion to public cause and the earnest and persuasive propaganda of Mr S Srinivasa Iyengar, the President-elect of the Congress"

The Hindu in another editorial warned Congressmen that they had not been elected "to fish for office which under the dyarchical system is not worth a day's purchase reckoned by lasting values". It said Congressmen were in the councils "not as effective lubricants to let the creaking dyarchic machine function but as the guardians of the interests of the people at large. Theirs will be an attitude of unbending independence. Untrammelled by any allegiance save that to the Congress and the country they will shape their course as suits not this party or that but as leads to the general welfare of the public at large. In a word the Congressmen would constitute a powerful opposition, a standing terror to all the reactionary forces in the council — whether these forces stand naked in their easily recognised shape or strut in the masquerade of novel labels".

Meanwhile, the ardent and unrepentant no-changer, C Rajagopalachari, had isolated himself in his ashram at Tiruchengode from where he carried on the constructive programme so dear to Gandhiji. One of his communications to *The Hindu* in August, 1926 read as follows. "Have you seen cotton melt? Melting like ice in the sun? Come here on a Saturday and you can see. You can see it if you go to any good Khaddar centre and watch the issue of cotton to the peasant women. How they crowd and shout and carry away the white stuff in their baskets beaming with delight? They are happy because they can bring it back as yarn next week and earn a few annas by the spinning. Bale after bale of cotton melts under the pressure of rural poverty which like the Indian sun is relentless and is everywhere. You cannot realise it unless you come and see it with your own eyes. Then you will no longer ask questions but buy Khaddar as a sacred duty; and no more send your spare money to the rich people who have built factories that throw our people out of employment"

Three years later Rajaji in one of his letters to *The Hindu* described a "Suddhi" (conversion) ceremony when an Adi-Dravida (Harijan) family near Salem which had embraced Christianity was reconverted to Hinduism at its request. "I had never before been present at a Suddhi ceremony" wrote Rajaji, "but I was glad to participate in this function. There was no bitterness obviously among the Christian inhabitants of the place. In fact when the ceremony began there happened to be as many Christians as Hindu Adi-Dravidas assembled to watch and participate in the ceremony. Vellavan and his wife and daughter (who were to be reconverted) were seated in the centre. The sacred fire was lighted and Swami Sahajanand explained the ceremony to the assembled people. Brothers and sisters, gross things are cleared with earth and with water. Finer things like gold are purified by the finer element of fire. For cleaning up the human soul there is a finer thing than fire itself and that is the Rama Mantra. First let me sprinkle water over you. Water is a great purifier. May this Ganga keep you to be ever clean in body and mind". He then called upon the assembled people to sing with him the Rama Mantra. The congregation then chanted the sacred name for a quarter of an hour. 'Friends, the atmosphere is now purified. Our thoughts are now centred

on God. Let us all pray that the family that will be reunited with us may ever remain good and true members of our society' the Swami said. He then asked each one of the re-entrants to pour a few grains of unhusked rice into the sacred fire and made them eat the burned grains uttering the name of Narayana. Then the Swami sang a few hymns and exhorted the assembled people to lead clean lives, think good thoughts and remember God in all their troubles and closed the proceedings"

The Hindu had been publishing in its columns every week extracts from Gandhiji's autobiography, "Experiments with Truth" and an Englishman and old friend of Gandhiji, Dr. Josiah Oldfield, Senior Physician to the Lady Margaret Trinitarian Hospital, Kent, wrote to it: "Mr. Gandhi in his reminiscences recalls his comradeship with myself and the influence that I had over him when he was a student in England and I should like to place on record for the encouragement of all young Indians coming to England that Mr. Gandhi placed his word on a higher plane than his life and that what he promised his mother he fulfilled wholly regardless whether it meant living or dying (this was with reference to Gandhiji's refusal to take meat even when his life depended on it)". He added: "We had many discussions upon religion and I recognise today that Gandhiji's life was far more in accord with the ideal life of a Christian, although he refused to become one in name than that of millions who are Christians in name but who do not pretend to follow even the rules of Christianity in their lives"

Whatever his political views with regard to British India, Srinivasa Sastri's ideas about the future of the princely states were far ahead of his time and almost revolutionary. But in his two lectures at Ernakulam in November, 1926, Sastri did prove prophetic in regard to some of the things which he said about the states

Sastri noted that for a long time the Congress had left the Indian states severely alone. "Never bring native states into our discussions, we used to say to ourselves. So rigidly did we carry our abstinence in these matters that for a long time we did not allow any subjects of Indian States to be Congressmen". Sastri said one of the chief causes for this attitude was "one of extreme nervousness". The cause of Indian Swaraj, responsible Government as we term it today, that cause has always had to fight against embattled forces of no mean order, interests of surpassing importance, powers of great force over human nature, institutions so firmly rooted that you could not think of even shaking them. While these were arrayed against us we did not wish, having some attainable end in view, to burden ourselves unduly. We did not wish to have more than one battle front. We knew the British authorities were difficult enough in all conscience to deal with. Need we summon into action 561 states, their princely houses, remembering ancient traditions, remembering treaties and sanads and engagements of one order or another, need we bring also into the field of action the subjects of Indian states who in our fondness of that day we used to imagine were perfectly contented to remain in that state of political nonage in which they were".

Sastri asked if it was true that in British India it was the wish of the people which hereafter was to be the mainspring of all public, Governmental, and state action, whether it was not the case that in Indian India it was the wishes,

the political aspirations of the subjects that must be allowed to dominate all further action "That point of view must govern all our political thinking in future", he said. He asked that if responsible Government were going to be introduced in British India how long were the subjects of Indian States going to remain in a comparatively unevolved system "Seventy millions you are in Indian India, if you are going to be a drag on British India and if the Crown of England acting through appropriate political instruments were still, after the dominionhood of India had been attained, to interfere in one or in another with the destinies of a third in area of India and a fourth in population in this country, responsible Government in India would be meaningless and would be shadowy, would be unworthy of having"

Sastri called for the elimination of the personal rule "howsoever benevolent in its nature and the replacement of it by what we call the reign of law. The Prince or the ruling chief must withdraw steadily and surely from active interference with the affairs of the state as the sovereign in constitutional countries has done. There is no escape from that" Sastri said it was inevitable that the smaller states would finally merge in British India — leaving only a few states of stature and past reputation to remain as units of the federation. Talking of treaties he said, "Have these treaties and sanads remained unchanged since they were made? Have they not been subjected to mysterious interpretations, to addenda and corrigenda of all sorts? Will not the Paramount Power tomorrow if it pleases it, tear up these treaties for its own purpose, not for the purpose of the State or its subjects but if it is necessary for the Paramount Power to set aside any of the important conditions of the treaty? I know there is no force on earth, no moral law that will prevent that happening. If then treaties and their articles could be changed for any one purpose could they not be changed in the interests of the subjects of the state?"

Sastri wanted a royal commission to be appointed to go into the whole question

The Hindu endorsed Sastri's fundamental proposition that the goal of Indian India, as it is of British India, should be responsible Government "but when he went on to suggest that such of the States as are fitted by their size, wealth and general importance to remain separate entities should take their place in the future federation of India, that all others should merge in British territory and that the whole question should be considered betimes by a Royal Commission on which all interested parties should be duly represented, he was treading on highly debatable ground and we must confess to grave doubts on each one of these points. It is first of all by no means certain that India's future constitution will be a federation and even if it should be such that it would be possible to reconcile the claims of Indian potentates with the paramount importance of having a strong central Government. Again what are the exact criteria for determining which states shall retain their identity and which shall not? All discrimination based on size, population, wealth and so on must necessarily be arbitrary and the ruling chief of a principality covering a score of square miles may plausibly contend that his treaty rights are just as sacred as those of H. E. H. the Nizam. If as Mr. Sastri suggests these treaties should not be held sacrosanct for all time and should be ruthlessly scrapped in the abiding interests of the people, where is the point in keeping even some of these states

intact merely to satisfy the *amour propre* of their rulers by conferring upon them the restricted status of constitutional rulers?"

"Broadminded statesmanship", The Hindu wrote on another occasion, "quite as much as their own interests require that Indian princes should, instead of merely seeking to isolate themselves in obscure and dubious safety, make their Government rest on the solid rock of people's contentment, which is possible only when they bring about full responsible Government". The Hindu accepted Srinivasa Sastri's plea when again writing on May 3, 1927 it said "It is in the nature of things impossible for the states to remain the antechambers of reaction which most of them are at present and the abiding interests of themselves, their subjects and their country require that they should enlarge the powers and privileges of their people so that in time they may become constitutional heads of Governments working in co-operation with each other for the common good of India. No commission can prevent the natural developments which we have indicated and no formal document to which the Princes and British India are parties can bind posterity in the way in which it is sought to bind it"

**O**N OCTOBER 22, 1926 a great calamity fell on The Hindu when its Editor, S Rangaswami, who had succeeded his uncle, Kasturiranga only three years earlier, passed away at the comparatively young age of 40. The Hindu wrote. "He wielded a ready pen and his characteristic writing which was caustic and critical but had no touch of malice in it was eagerly devoured by the large and appreciative public. He dealt with foreign topics in a manner which at once arrested the attention of the reader so much that the frequent articles which appeared in these columns on the war all the years it lasted were awaited with great interest and read widely by Indians and Europeans alike for their lucid summing up of the situation, admirable description of military strategy and accurate forecast of coming movements. He dealt with this topic in a manner which could not have been surpassed by a trained military critic. Indeed the range of his studies was so wide and the style of his articles so peculiarly allusive and fascinating that even those who writhed under his relentless exposure readily acknowledged the masterly and inimitable fashion in which the indictment was made. Mr Rangaswami Iyengar was a man of wide sympathies, broad outlook and generous instincts, he was quick to recognise merit and give praise where it was due as he was alert and vigilant in administering a sharp rebuke where in his opinion it was deserved. He was no fanatic in politics and believed that placed as India was change of strategy to suit the movements of the opponents was a solemn duty. Reserved by temperament, he avoided active participation in politics but that gave him an advantage in that he was able to see more of the game than the protagonists do, to take a true perspective and to form a detached opinion of men and measures. Gentle and generous, kind and affable, Mr. Iyengar was loved by those who came into intimate contact with him. A dispassionate critic, a keen observer, a brilliant writer, and a distinguished journalist, Mr. Iyengar was an ornament to the profession to which he belonged and we of The Hindu can never feel sufficiently grateful for the solid and admirable service he has rendered for it. Endowed with natural gifts of a high order and trained as he was in the high traditions of journalism, which the founders of The Hindu set for the paper and which their successors in the Editorial chair cherished and improved, Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar experienced little difficulty in keeping the torch handed on to him brilliantly burning".

A friend of Rangaswami wrote of him in *The Hindu*: "He was a rather small and sullen boy in the junior B A class in the Presidency College, Madras. He was conspicuous by a pair of fine diamond earrings and for his extreme intelligence. He used to be one of Mr H J Allen's favourite students in the history class. He was equally distinguished on the hockey field where he was a fast and plucky player. He was a polished and cultured man of the world and remarkably free from the indisciplined enthusiasms, the wild ideals of the average young collegian. There must be many men in Madras who have cause to remember the helping hand he was ever ready to extend to a lame dog"

Another friend wrote: "He was an emphatic, exaggerated and extraordinary protest against all social and moral conventions of the world, especially those attached to a Brahmin by birth. I always remember when he was in college how he used to go alone even in the streets reading a six penny novel. Even when he was only 18, he had read almost all the big things in English literature. The avidity with which he read novels was indescribable. Once when he went to attend a marriage he sat in a room and in the midst of all the noise and bustle of the marriage, finished half a dozen novels of Jules Verne which he had taken with him. He had not a prepossessing appearance nor did he pay any special attention to his outward appearance. But his manner was irresistible, his grace was charming, his knowledge was profound and his expression was delightful".

An old classmate who greeted Rangaswami after a long time was told: "Our happiest days were when we were at college. You dream when you are a boy of the life you are going to lead, of the things which you want to do etc., but when you pass out of college the chill blast of life staggers you and by the time you recover from the shock for most of us the good opportunities for ensuring our success in this life are gone"

Dr R. Nagaraja Sarma, veteran contributor to *The Hindu* on religious topics, recalled that once Rangaswami on seeing the manuscript of a review of a Sanskrit book on mantras asked him "Have you really any faith in all these mantras, spells and incantations, personal magnetism etc? I personally have none. The best way of influencing humanity for good would be to carry conviction to your fellowmen by a process of rational persuasion and not by mantras"

On another occasion Rangaswami said: "Never mind your text book theories and discussions. I realise some superhuman agency (what it is I do not care or stop to investigate) is responsible for the creation of the universe and the best way to worship him is to devote your energies and intellect to the service of the poor, the weak and the downtrodden who are all God's creatures. Teach such a robust philosophy to your students".

Rangaswami was the son of Srinivasaraghava Iyengar, elder brother of Kasturiranga and he had his early education in Baroda where his father was Dewan for some time. He passed out of the Presidency college, Madras and studied law. Journalism attracted him and he joined his uncle in *The Hindu* in 1910. Ill-health dogged his career and in the closing years he fell a victim to tuberculosis and a stay at the Madanapalle sanatorium did not prolong his life.

Dr. C. R. Reddy spoke of him: "I suppose I have been thrown in the company of journalists, English, American, Japanese and Indian as much as any man in

India and I can say without the least exaggeration that nobody had such an instinct and flair for journalism, such a genius almost as Rangaswami. He wielded a trenchant and spicy pen. But his invective was of the type that deserves to be called satire with nothing offensive, vulgar and out of taste in it. I half suspect that to him journalism was more a fine art than a mission which probably explains why he fitted in so well into the somewhat rigid detachment of The Hindu atmosphere. Death has snatched away the most brilliant journalist of our time, young in years but with a cool and native judgment and a style all his own, peerless in its point and penetration".

V. S. Srinivasa Sastri said for many years the public of the province whenever the Anglo-Indian Press had been sarcastic and uncharitable had turned habitually to Rangaswami for a spirited and appropriate rejoinder and "have seldom been disappointed".

In fact Rangaswami's running fight with Earle Welby, Editor of the Madras Mail, was a glorious period of his editorship and he tore him to pieces and only his mangled remains could be seen. We have given some samples of this fight in the earlier pages.

According to the London Daily Telegraph, Lord Willingdon, former Governor of Madras, an indictment of whose administration was written by Rangaswami, while dissenting from the verdict on his regime, privately expressed his admirations of the man who could produce so telling an indictment.

An admirer compared the breadth and sweep of Rangaswami's style to a river in all its fullness. "The allusiveness of his language and the profusion of his metaphors and similes made the reader feel he was playing hide and seek with him. Of satire and irony he was a brilliant master; he was called 'Martial Law Officer'. It was all produced with effortless ease in the matter of a few minutes".

His editorials on the Punjab happenings were masterpieces of eloquence and a well documented indictment of the atrocities perpetrated on a peaceful people by a coterie of arrogant and power-mad Englishmen. But his best performance was reserved for the Moderates to whom he gave no quarter, showed no pity and mercilessly played them for their pseudo patriotism, their pitiful attempts to serve their masters, the bureaucracy and their country too. He called them "Moderates only in their patriotism".

When an appeal was made in Britain and in India that the Amritsar tragedy should be forgotten Rangaswami wrote. "How can there be peace when we do not know whether we have won or lost? If we have won let that be made clear by deeds and not by words which might mean anything or nothing. If we have lost then obviously there can be no cessation, no halting by the wayside till India's honour and self-respect are vindicated".

When the Moderates expressed the fear that the reforms would be withdrawn if the policy of non co-operation by the Congress was continued, he wrote: "There are occasions on which it is wiser to let go the bird in hand and pin our hopes on those in the bush".

Describing the unenviable position of the Moderates while the Non co-operation movement was raging in the land he wrote: "A freehold between the upper and the nether millstones is not the most desirable of habitations and that is or till lately was the delectable position they occupy".



He wrote: "Moderatism is not a policy but a disease". Again: "Liberalism is a disembodied spirit, a form without substance" "Mr. Montagu hoped that the bureaucracy would be liberalised. In the result one feels that the Liberals have become officialised"

He reserved his choicest epithets for Rt Hon V S Srinivasa Sastri who in his eyes was the villain of the piece among the Liberals and our narrative has already provided instances where Sastri suffered grievously from his masterly pen. We content ourselves with giving one more quotation. "It was said of the Austrians that they had a genius for defeat. It may be said with equal justice of Mr Sastri that he has a genius for surrender"

He did not spare the highest in the land, be he the Viceroy or Mahatma Gandhi from the barbs of sharp criticism. He spoke of Lord Reading leaving the shores of India "unhonoured, unwept and unsung" and with Indians heaving a sigh of relief and he questioned Gandhiji's conception of the duties of a journalist and his placing the politician on a higher level.

While his predecessor was totally against council entry and a pronounced no changer, Rangaswami veered round to the view that there might be something to be said in favour of those who fought for council entry. He warned and attacked the No Changers for their puritanism and spirit of intolerance. Rajaji, in the vanguard of the No Changers, took offence at the writings in *The Hindu* and in a speech in Nagpur said "My esteemed friend, the Editor of *The Hindu* (Kasturiranga Iyengar), I am sorry to say is lying ill in his bed. But his leader writer goes on writing in a bantering tone. Banter is hardly the right mood in which to approach these questions". The sub-editor who was editing Rajaji's copy was told by Rangaswami that the speech was to be published in full. The curious part of the story was that Rangaswami had never met Rajaji even once.

Reserved and shy by nature, Rangaswami was kind and considerate in his dealings with everyone. He was a keen sportsman and in addition to hockey, played cricket and billiards. The *Hindu* instituted the Rangaswami Cup in the National Hockey Championship in his memory in 1957.

On the death of his cousin K. Srinivasan took over the editorship of the paper and his brother K. Gopalan became the printer and publisher some months later.

Rangaswami's mantle as a leader writer of brilliance was taken over by N. Raghunatha Aiyer, a new recruit but with vast experience as editor of a morning newspaper in the city from which he parted company most reluctantly and with a literary style which was to dominate Indian journalism for the next 30 years. Here is a sample of one of his earliest leaders, which was a comment on a debate on India in the House of Lords in April, 1927.

"The annual farce is over. Lord Olivier has asked his question on India, Lord Birkenhead has spread his pinions and soared far and wide, surveying all things in heaven, on earth and in the nether regions, now rejoicing at the sight of sunlit summits of peace and prosperity, now 'flapping from out his condor wings invisible woe' on all political malcontents; the Lords duly impressed have relapsed into somnolent repose and India has again so far as the Mother of Parliaments is concerned, dropped into the abyss of obscurity from which she was for a moment lifted into the lime light for the inspection of the curious and the edification of the wise like some extinct plesiosaurus. If one thing stands out more clearly than anything else from these turgid orations it is

the comfortable assurance that Indian nationalism is a back number, that India's demand may be treated with contempt because she is no longer in a position to enforce it"

The Hindu concluded on this bitter note "Where every assertion is a wilful perversion or a mischievous taunt, it is a waste of time to discuss them seriously. What the country has to take note of is the intransigent temper of our rulers. It is only nationalist unity and rock-like determination to achieve freedom that can prevail against it".

A significant step in the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity was taken in March, 1927 when at a conference of 30 prominent Muslims in Delhi including Mr. Jinnah, a formula was accepted according to which Muslims would be prepared to accept joint electorates in all provinces and be willing to make to Hindu minorities in Bengal, the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province the same concessions that the Hindu majority in other provinces was prepared to make to the Muslim minority. The formula provided that in Bengal and Punjab the proportion of representation in the Legislature should be in accordance with the population. In the Central Legislature the Muslim representation should be not less than a third of the total strength and they should be elected by mixed electorates.

The Hindu welcomed the formula as a basis for discussion and paid a tribute to S. Srinivasa Iyengar "who seems to have given the first fillip to this discussion by putting forward concrete proposals on behalf of the Congress. Let us hope that the effort which has so well begun will meet with unqualified success".

The Hindu stressed the importance of solving the Hindu-Muslim question once and for all "both in order to give the country's answer to Lord Birkenhead's challenge and to give such a direction to national activities as would facilitate the attainment of Swaraj. There is no use in disguising the fact that on the quick and satisfactory disposal of the question depends the success of our efforts to reach our political goal". The Hindu said: "That Mr. Jinnah and other Muslim leaders who had made the suggestions are entitled to speak for their community cannot be questioned and it is quite wrong to doubt their representative character".

The All-India Congress Committee at its meeting in Bombay in May approved the Hindu-Muslim formula. The decision was hailed by all those present and the Bombay Correspondent of The Hindu reported: "This day will be written down as a red letter day in the history of the National Congress". The Hindu said the event "marks another noteworthy landmark in the country's progress towards national solidarity". The acceptance of the formula, it said, would be widely welcomed "for its essential justice and intrinsic merits; for it is calculated to satisfy at once the claims of all the three parties concerned in the points at issue—Indian nationalism, communal interests and distinctive linguistic cultures".

The Hindu again paid a tribute to the part played by S. Srinivasa Iyengar and said: "It is unanimously recognised that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar laboured hard to bring about a settlement with an enthusiasm and earnestness which knew no fatigue and which defied every discouraging circumstance and disappointment. He has now his reward and one hopes that the seed sown at Bombay will ere long bear good fruit".

Unfortunately, the hopes raised by the Delhi accord were shortlived and Srinvasa Iyengar was to complain later when he quit the Congress that the formula which he took so much pain to evolve was sabotaged and the country had to pay a heavy price for it

The A.I.C.C. on May 17, 1927 called upon its working committee to frame a Swaraj constitution for India in consultation with the elected members of the Central and provincial legislatures and leaders of political parties and place it before a special meeting of the A.I.C.C.

On November 9, 1927, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, announced the appointment of an all-British statutory commission (which came to be known later as the Simon Commission) to go into the question of constitutional reforms and said the commission headed by Sir John Simon, would visit India early in the new year for a preliminary enquiry. The announcement was made after the Viceroy had met Indian leaders including Gandhiji

The Hindu described the announcement as "a monumental farce". "India has had to suffer many indignities", it wrote, "at the hands of Britain but it was reserved to Mr Baldwin's Government to strike upon the most irritating and malignant of them all. An all-British commission made up of amiable mediocrities is the response that Britain has seen fit to make to India's unparalleled services in the cause of the Empire, her undaunted efforts at attaining a position of equality in the eyes of nations and her unconquerable hopes for the future. And yet she will throw up her hand in despair and pretend to commiserate India on her shortsighted policy when the latter answers, as she must, insult with contempt and injury with inflexible determination to carve her own future regardless of Britain's frowns or favours. No one can read the laboured, unconvincing and half-hearted statement issued by Lord Irwin in defence of his master's decision to send out an all British commission to judge of India's fitness for further reforms without feeling infinite compassion for him and realising with all the terrible grimness of finality that it is fatal folly to look for our political salvation outside our own determined and united efforts or to expect the vested interests that hold India in their grip to rise to the heights of self-eliminating altruism and help this country to realise its honourable ambitions".

The Hindu declared. "India has never agreed, and will never agree that the British Parliament should be the arbiter of her destiny". Pointing out that the commission barring the Chairman, was composed of "third rate men who have absolutely no knowledge of India", The Hindu said the commission was an "insult to India. It stands for the betrayal of the most solemn pledges, the repudiation of the fundamental principles of Britain's own constitutional practice, the cynical disregard of those eternal moral scruples which should regulate the conduct of states, no less than of individuals. Co-operation and co-operation has been the constant refrain of Britain all these eight years and at last we have here in concrete form her ideas of the kind of co-operation she expects from us — the co-operation of the slave in chains with the overseer who superintends his agony whip in hand and not the co-operation that exalts equals and draws the ties of friendship tighter. Let India give the only possible reply to this arrogant gesture of the British Cabinet. They count upon our mutual differences, our personal and communal jealousies and the much tried faith of our Moderates in Britain to keep us apart and make us fall an easy

prey to their scheming and make ourselves the laughing stock of the world. Shall it be said of us that we sold our birthright for a mess of pottage and merited the curse of unborn generations? To those questions the Indian National Congress has only one reply to give — it will have nothing to do with the commission”

As the country with one voice rejected the Simon Commission, The Hindu describing it as “thorough, unequivocal and spirited condemnation of the Viceroy’s announcement”, a call for the boycott of the commission came from the staid and veteran Moderate, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer who said: “I am in favour of a complete and effective boycott of the Commission. The boycott would lose its efficacy if it were sectional. Nothing would be lost by such a complete boycott even if the result were to put off the commission or the next step in the reforms for a few years”.

Mahomed Ali Jinnah said: “After analysing the position without the least sentiment, I have come to the conclusion that this commission is nothing but a camouflage. Now, what is India to do? The only answer that I can give is that Indians should have nothing to do with this Simon show”

While the storm of protest was raging in India and The Hindu daily carried columns of views of politicians and institutions on the British action, the British Labour Party leader, Ramsay MacDonald in a message to The Hindu through its London representative, appealed against the boycott decision. He said “It is too soon for me to express a final opinion about the proposed Indian Commission. I want first of all to be satisfied as to how it is going to work and the Labour Party is in communication with the authorities so that it may possess itself of that information. I hope my friends in India will not come to too hasty conclusions as to boycotting”

The Hindu said the “pusillanimity” exhibited by the Labour Party “has come with something of a shock even to those who never pinned much faith in the professions of British politicians, whether in or out of office. Lord Birkenhead’s speech shows that Mr. MacDonald and his colleagues were from the beginning in the conspiracy against India”

The Hindu indicated the task before the nation now that the decision to reject the Simon Commission had been taken. “We must go forward to assert our will”, it wrote, “and the first preliminary to doing so is to apprise the world of what we want and to show that we are determined to have it. The National Demand contains our minimum stipulations and because the Swaraj it asks for is our birthright it must be formally endorsed by the united voice of the nation and inscribed on the roll of history as our solemn declaration of rights. Let our leaders busy themselves forthwith in mobilising the exhaustless hidden powers of the nation and leave the Parliamentary Commission to its own sweet devices”

At the Madras session of the Congress in December, 1927 a resolution was passed declaring Independence as the goal of India. The resolution, which was moved by Jawaharlal Nehru said: “This Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be complete national independence with full control over the defence forces of the country, the financial and economic policy and the relations with foreign countries. The Congress demands that this right of the people of India should forthwith be recognised and given effect to particularly in the complete withdrawal of the alien army of occupation”.

In January, 1928 *The Hindu* wrote many editorials entreating Indian leaders, including Liberals, to maintain the unity achieved in regard to the boycott of the Simon Commission and took pains to rebut the criticisms made against the boycott decision in India and abroad. It wrote on January 16. "The boycott is no doubt a political movement in the sense that it has been brought about by a reactionary political act of the Government and is being directed and organised by the country's leaders with a view to the achievement among others of a political purpose, namely, the practical repudiation by the country at large of the commission and the autocratic assumptions on which it is based. The movement is nonetheless national in the fullest sense because it draws its strength from the undiminished nationwide opposition to Great Britain's presumptuous arrogation to herself of the right to decide India's destiny. The storm of indignant protest that has swept over the country since the announcement of the Commission and the resolute determination with which all parties have settled down to work to make the protest effective are a sufficient answer to the shallow sneer that boycott is a sectional move engineered by disgruntled politicians who do not grasp the realities of the All-India situation. Indeed, the exact opposite is the truth for it is the first time for many years that even the most determined co-operators have discovered as a result of the Birkenhead affront that self-respecting co-operation is impossible on the only terms that Great Britain will offer"

Again writing on the same subject a few days later *The Hindu* said: "The question that arises for us in India to face is shall we deny any act of ours, slacken our efforts to effect complete boycott? That the answer to this question is an emphatic negative is evident from the grim readiness with which the country is organising the campaign. Official circles have come to realise that the boycott would prove a menacing reality. Indeed the Commission has changed its tactics. It has adopted an easy method of facing boycott by converting its programme from one of active enquiry into a mere 'search for information'. Its endeavour seems to be . . . to weaken the effect of non co-operation on the part of India. No conceivable opportunity should therefore be lost to demonstrate that we refuse to play the part of inanimate pawns in the game of British jingoes. We have a solemn duty to discharge by Sir John and his colleagues and that is to help them realise that India will accept nothing less than what her representatives had laid down as her minimum demand and a round table conference with Government to settle the constitution on the basis of that demand. There is nothing in that demand which is unreasonable or unpracticable and if the authorities are not prepared to listen to reason, what right have they to our co-operation?"

The Madras Legislative Council carried a Congress party motion to boycott the Simon Commission, although the Chief Minister, Dr. P. Subbarayan voted against it. All but three of the members of the ministerial party were for boycott of the Commission. The *Hindu* which said the verdict of the council was against the continuance of dyarchy, criticised the open opposition to the motion displayed by the Chief Minister as "inconsistent with the leadership of the party that is clearly against him on this crucial national issue". The *Hindu* called upon him to inform the Governor that "he proposes to boycott the commission in accordance with the decision of the council or that he does not

command the support of his party or of the council in his view of what is a most essential matter and that he must be allowed to vacate office"

The Hindu prominently published an appeal by Mrs. Besant to boycott the Simon Commission. The appeal said "Awake, arise, men and women of every caste, class, community! Your mother's voice calls you to make her mistress of her own household. Do not desert her in her hour of need. Boycott the Simon Commission"

On February 3, the day of hartal all over India, disturbances broke out in Madras and the army was called out in George Town area. "What would have otherwise been a triumph of the national spirit was marred by the disgraceful happenings in Madras which led to the loss of two lives and the infliction of grave injuries on a number of others as a result of police firing and the mob getting out of control", commented The Hindu. "As a demonstration of the united nation-wide desire to boycott the Simon Commission and repudiate the autocratic assumptions, yesterday's hartal was in spite of the regrettable happenings in Madras and the one or two sporadic incidents elsewhere, a complete success. The accounts received from all quarters make it clear that both in this province and elsewhere the principle towns wore the aspect of cities of the dead, so thorough was the cessation of all locomotion or other normal activity, the general public was so fully resolved to make the boycott a success that the efforts in some places of non-indigenous agencies controlling the means of communication to create a semblance of activity proved futile".

The Central Legislative Assembly on the motion of Lala Lajpat Rai on February 18, 1928, decided to boycott the Simon Commission. The motion was carried by a majority of six votes amidst scenes of excitement. The motion was to have been voted upon on February 16 but the House was adjourned owing to the death of a Congress member.

Describing the tense atmosphere in the House the New Delhi Correspondent wrote "It was a grim fight that was waged in the Assembly on the question of boycotting the Simon Commission. There was a general understanding among the non-officials that the verdict should be taken at six p.m. The lobbies were humming with the talk that the Government would be defeated by three votes. Mr. M. C. Raja was reading aloud a manuscript speech, taking Pandit Malaviya severely to task for his attitude towards the depressed classes some 15 years ago in order to find a reason for welcoming the Simon Commission, when Sir Basil Blackett, Finance Member, stood up and broke the sad news of the sudden death of Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas in Delhi. The House was adjourned as a mark of respect to the memory of the Karachi member. He had been a prominent member of the Nationalist party and had come to Delhi in response to urgent summons. He had been in indifferent health but his party mandate was there and he was slowly driving to the Assembly to be present at the voting time but on the way he grew worse and while he was being carried in an ambulance back to the hospital he collapsed. Mr. Vishindas' death means one vote less but one or two more members may come up to swell the popular ranks on Saturday. But there is at the same time the risk of the Government's voting strength gaining accession. So much value is attached to the presence of members on each side, that the temporary absence of Mr. Farookhi for a few

minutes at the beginning of the day's sitting led to many rumours. Some said in the lobbies that Mr Farookhi had been "kidnapped".

"The verdict of the country which the Assembly in unmistakable terms has conveyed to the Secretary of State, the Viceroy and the statutory commission is one over which every patriotic Indian has just reason to rejoice", The Hindu wrote.

When the Council of State, the Upper house of the Central Legislature, decided to co-operate with the commission, The Hindu angrily denounced the elders who represented "extinct political reputations" and were "senile reactionaries" and said the house "has upheld its honour rooted in dishonour by passing the self-stultifying motion which found a sponsor in the valiant knight of Nagpur (Sir Harisingh Gour). Sir John Simon will no doubt plume himself upon what he may in the blessed certitude of his own ignorance fancy to be the brightest feather yet added to his cap, we shall in all probability have from his secretariat one of those bluffing communiques which are adding to the gaiety of nations, dwelling upon the striking majority in favour of the commission and praising the elders for their patriotism, foresight and statesmanship. That at any rate is the least he could do for such valiant supporters and if the "striking majority" is in fact a disreputable minority since only nine out of 34 members who voted for the commission were elected Indians as against 13 elected Indian representatives who voted against the commission, what after all does one illusion more matter when the commission has already safely ensconced itself behind a whole barricade of them?"

As the Simon Commission moved into the Madras Presidency in the course of its tour it found more and more evidence of the hostility of the Indian people. The Hindu carried reports from its mofussil Correspondents of demonstrations and public meetings in protest against the commission. Pictures were published of the commission being greeted with black flags. Madras observed a voluntary hartal on the arrival of the commission in the city on February 26.

The Simon Commission made its second trip to India in October, 1928. The Hindu daily carried extensive reports of its visits to major cities with its Indian counterpart (presided over by Sir C. Sankaran Nair), the evidence given before it and also news of its boycott and preparations for boycott in places where it was due to visit. The paper also published a cartoon showing Lord Simon in an Indian peasant's dress ploughing the Indian sands of "boycott". The caption was "Sir John Simon at his task again".

Reviewing the commission's work in Bombay The Hindu wrote on October 27, 1928 "To any unprejudiced observer of the actual state of feeling in the country towards this unwanted commission, the practically complete boycott of it by all the popular and thinking elements in the presidency of Bombay must have been manifested from the very first. The effectiveness of the boycott demonstrations at Poona were only the prelude to the more effective manner in which the people of Bombay including the intelligentsia as well as all representative bodies of opinion of that presidency boycotted the commission by refusing to tender before them evidence to prove the country's fitness for Swaraj. In the place of evidence from any comprehensive and representative organisation was substituted the puerile, communal and discordant voices of disgruntled groups whose performances must have struck Sir John Simon as a most sorry substitute for material expressive of national feelings and

demands. There was not one among the elder politicians and public men grown grey in the service of the country, whether of the Liberal or any other persuasion in the Bombay Presidency — whom the Government had delighted to honour by offices and titles of knighthood — who could be got to appear before the commission. There was not one among the many Indian merchant princes of Bombay who could be persuaded to give evidence either, nor were the Government able to persuade the acknowledged leaders of labourers, peasant organisations to tender evidence, while the nationalist and Swarajist ranks were arrayed in complete boycott of the whole show. Sir John's commission had to be fed with the thin fare of representation from the depressed classes and mushroom Muslim and other organisations brought into existence for the occasion. We offer our congratulations to the people of Bombay on the splendid example that they have thus set before the country in regard to the boycott of the commission and would earnestly hope that other provinces will in this respect be able to show as good a record".

Many were the casualties among Indian leaders from police brutality as the Simon Commission made its appearance in Lahore, where Lala Lajpat Rai was beaten by the police while leading a protest demonstration (he was to die later from the after effects of the injuries received then) and at Lucknow where the police victims were Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant. The Hindu wrote: "If the huge boycott demonstrations and the police zoolum that follow in their train, have made it clear how thoroughgoing and determined is the hostility to the commission in this country, the way in which the commission has been conducting its business must make it no less clear how unreal and fictitious is its professed plan of discharging its ostensible task of acting as rapporteurs to the British Parliament. It has not only descended to very undignified propaganda to boost itself and the measure of support it has received in the country, but has throughout acted in a mischievous partisan spirit by tampering with the freedom of the Press, by suppressing from the public all material and important evidence such as the principal Government memoranda which might enable it to judge the nature and strength of the powers of reaction arrayed against the realisation of its aspirations and by elaborately advertising and exaggerating such internal differences communal and other as there are bound to be in a country politically situated as India is. The way in which the authorities seem bent upon abusing their powers clearly indicates that matters are heading for a crisis. If any violent disturbances should result the responsibility will be equally that of the Government, of the commission and of all those who aid and abet them. It is our earnest hope that no amount of provocation will goad the country into a course of action other than strictly non-violent. Now is the time to consolidate all our constructive energies and concentrate on the task of stiffening and widening the boycott in such a manner as to demonstrate unmistakably that the friends of the commission are the unfriends of India".

Jawaharlal Nehru in a letter to Gandhiji which was published in *Young India* in December, 1928, referred to an incident during the demonstration organised against the Simon Commission at Lucknow. He said: "Soon after the mounted and foot police had driven us back near the station, a young man, whom I took to be a student, came to me and said he could bring me two revolvers immediately if I wanted to use them. We had just experienced



baton and lathi charges and there was a great deal of anger and resentment in the crowd. I suppose he thought it was a favourable moment to make the offer. I told him not to be foolish. Soon after, I found out quite casually that this particular person was known to be in the C.I.D." Gandhiji's comment was "Pandit Jawaharlal was safe as he has no secrets. If he finds any use for revolvers in his scheme for the freedom of the country, he will not need an offer from an outsider to lend him one. He will carry it himself openly and use it effectively when in his opinion the occasion has arrived. So he was safe from the blandishment of the C.I.D."

The Hindu wrote "The Government will no doubt try to discredit the story. But the terrible disclosures made by the agent provocateur Banerji in the course of his trial in the Punjab some months back showed how ruthlessly the bureaucracy has perfected the mean system of suborning witnesses and using decoys to lure the unwary and trap political opponents. The whole course of events in Lahore and Lucknow has, moreover, shown as we have repeatedly pointed out in these columns, that the clashes with the public have been eagerly expected and carefully prepared for by the police; hence it is not surprising to come across evidence which indicates that they or their agents secretly but actively worked to bring them about. The diabolical attempt to implicate Pandit Jawaharlal failed because as Mahatma Gandhi points out, the actions of Congressmen are plain and above board. But many an innocent and unsuspecting man must have fallen an easy victim to the "blandishments" of the C.I.D. Nothing could be more degrading or humiliating for the most powerful bureaucracy on earth than that it should have to resort to such methods to circumvent political opposition"

When the Simon Commission visited Madras on February 18, 1929, it faced the same boycott which it had experienced wherever it went in India. The Hindu had prepared its readers days in advance of the visit of the commission to boycott it and carried in its columns daily prominently featured appeals by leaders for boycott of the commission and announcing that a procession would be taken out in the city on that day. The Hindu also declared a holiday for itself on the 18th and said: "The Simon Commission having made under vigilant bureaucratic chaperonage its grand tour of India at the expense of its uncompromisingly hostile people, has chosen Madras where up to shed the lustre of its last rays, before departing these shores no wiser than it came, but not less cocksure, to all outward appearances, in its invincible ignorance. Upon Madras therefore devolves the duty of making it unclear even to the carefully cultivated obtuseness of the commission that if 12 months ago, the whole country unanimously declared that it was not wanted, it is a thousand times less wanted today; if familiarity has bred contempt for the doings of the commission it has also induced profound pity for the commissioners individually bound helplessly to their unenviable task and having all the while to pretend for the greater glory of the British name that they immensely relish it. A stray jackdaw here and there has in the meanwhile been taught to preen its feathers dutifully in welcome to this unwanted guest; but the very fact of that sudden allegiance and the way in which it was secured have been sufficient to put the vast majority of the community on its guard against the expert wiles of the stranger"

The Hindu then referred to the Justice Party's change of attitude and characterised it as a volte face which could not be easily paralleled in the history of political opportunism. It went on "This parliamentary inquisition which was bad enough in the promise has shown itself infinitely worse in the performance. A united nation's will as embodied in the decisions of the Congress and the All Parties Conference decreed its ostracism and the decree has with insignificant exceptions been fully and faithfully carried out. Bombay, Lahore, Calcutta, Rangoon — in fact every one of the great cities which the commission visited, has unequivocally repudiated it. Shall it be said of Madras that it alone failed the country — Madras which as Pandit Motilal pertinently reminds us, was the first to hold aloft the banner of boycott"?

Madras did not fail the country on February 18, 1929 and The Hindu reported "Once again Madras demonstrated yesterday in a manner spontaneous and striking its attitude towards the Simon Commission. The hartal with which the general public greeted the Commission on their arrival in the morning was a complete success in so far as any rate as Indian business was concerned and equally successful were the black flag procession and the subsequent boycott meeting. Madras may well congratulate itself on the complete success with which it conducted the non-violent boycott of the Simon Commission yesterday."

A sequel to the presentation of an address to the commission by the Corporation of Madras at the harbour on its arrival was the disorder and confusion which prevailed at the meeting of the Corporation Council the next day when Congress and other Councillors protested against the insult offered to them by the President A. Ramaswami Mudaliar in not sending invitations to them for the function. The President found it impossible to conduct the proceedings and dissolved the meeting.

The Hindu said the President had brought the trouble upon his head "by his discourteous and blameworthy action towards those members of the council in particular who had voted against the address and the public of Madras in whose name the address was presented. The decision to present the address at the harbour instead of in the council chamber was in itself a grave slight on the self-respect of the premier municipal Corporation of this Presidency. But when this was followed up by a deliberate determination on the part of the President in issuing invitations to attend the function only to those councillors who had voted for the address — that this act of discourtesy was entirely deliberate was shown by the President's failure to issue a ticket even when a Congress Councillor had applied for one — the President's action ceased to be merely a childish exhibition of bad manners, it amounted to a wanton outrage on constitutional propriety and an affront to a representative house".

A. Ramaswami Mudaliar defended his action in not issuing invitations to those Councillors who had opposed the presentation of address to the Simon Commission at a public meeting on February 22. The Hindu published a verbatim report of his speech running to six columns. In its main editorial it dismissed his explanation as unconvincing. "Mr. Mudaliar urges", it wrote, "in defence of the venue selected and the restriction by his own decision of admission to those who had not voted against the address, that some of the others had threatened to create a scene. Granting that they had so acted would the responsibility for such boorishness have been his? Anyway, is not

the President of the Corporation on such occasions but the dutiful mouth-piece of the entire body of councillors or can he with impunity sacrifice the dignity of the Corporation to the squeamishness of a body which the whole country has repudiated and in doing so perpetrate gross discourtesy to his fellow councillors? It is unthinkable that he should have harboured the delusion that any section of the public would approve his conduct. If he is so sure of public support the only honourable course left to him was to tender his resignation and await the decision of the House"

The curtain was rung down on the controversy at a meeting of the Corporation Council on February 27 when the President, Ramaswami Mudaliar, expressed regret if he had insulted any member by his action and Satya-murthi and Burra Satyanarayana, Councillors, apologised for using unparliamentary language at the previous meeting.

As the Simon Commission arrived in Delhi in March 1929 to conclude its work in India, "a well informed Political Correspondent" wrote from Delhi: "The fact that the boycott has told with deadly effect on the commission and its work and that the central and provincial committees have been nothing but inconvenient encumbrances to the Simon seven and have proved a dismal failure so far as the Government's efforts to get a semblance of support to them is concerned, must be palpably plain to the Viceroy. Whatever purpose they have served in the make-believe plans of the bureaucracy the Viceroy has no more use for them"

What the Correspondent said about the provincial and central Indian committees associated with the Simon Commission was proved true by Sir C Sankaran Nair, Chairman of the Indian Central Committee, who said in an interview in London, in June, 1929 that the members of the Central Committee had no knowledge of either the views of the members of the Simon Commission or of the lines on which the Commission was likely to report. Asked if there was no exchange of views between the members of the Central Committee and the Simon Commission he said, "Exchange of views has so far consisted of expression of views by the members of the Central Committee only. Sir John Simon and other members of the Commission have refrained from any expression of views, holding that their duty is to report to the King, Cabinet and Parliament only". Sir Sankaran was asked if there would be a round table discussion before the Central Committee wrote their report. He replied "I do not think so"

Commenting, *The Hindu* said Sir Sankaran's disclosures had not come as a surprise to it since from the beginning it had maintained that the so called "Joint Free Conference" was nothing but a cleverly designed side show intended to trap the unwary. Its inferior status and the purely ornamental character of its functions were seen through in India from the very inception of its work. It is plain that the entire scheme of the Indian Central Committee has ended in a fiasco"

The report of the Committee appointed by the All Parties Conference, under the chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru and known as the Nehru Committee, was submitted towards the end of 1928. Its main recommendations were: (1) Dominion status should be conceded. (2) North-West Frontier Province should have the same status as other provinces and Sind should be a separate province. (3) Separate electorate for Muslims was rejected but reservation of

seats provided for them (4) A federal constitution was envisaged with or without Indian states. (5) Declaration of rights in the constitution (6) Transfer of defence to Indian Minister. (7) Responsible Government in the centre and provinces. The Hindu said a dispassionate survey of the situation "cannot but lead to the conclusion that on the whole the recommendations should be accepted by the country in view of the overwhelming necessity there is to present a united front and secure the greatest common measure of agreement on the vital questions involved. That task has been performed in a manner which has elicited the admiration of the country, notwithstanding the voices of dissent heard here and there"

The report was supported by an All Parties' Conference in Madras in October, 1928 but it started a controversy over the question of Dominion Status or Independence which was to plague the country in the next two years and which saw a division in the Congress based on these two concepts. In a note on Satyamurthi's letter on the subject of India's goal The Hindu wrote: "In our view the life giving programme of the Congress consists not in passing mere paper resolutions but in promoting national unity in as concrete form as possible on the basis of maximum agreement and in developing the necessary sanction therefor. Mr Satyamurthi and his friends must realise that this unity is an essential pre-requisite for achieving national freedom, whatever form it may assume"

On November 3, 1928, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution declaring India's goal to be complete independence but accepting the Nehru Committee's recommendations as a great step towards political advance. The resolution was agreed to both by Pandit Motilal Nehru, author of the report and S. Srinivasa Iyengar, protagonist of the independence creed.

At the All Parties Convention in Calcutta on December 23 it was unanimously agreed that Dominion Status should be the basis of India's constitution. Commenting on the decision, The Hindu said the adoption of article one of the draft constitution framed by the Nehru Committee that "India shall have the same constitutional status in the community of nations as a dominion within the British Commonwealth" marked the "first distinct achievement of the great gathering that assembled at Calcutta"

But Congressmen however were sharply divided over the issue and The Hindu on December 26 reported intense political activity in the Congress camp in Calcutta. The Congress Working Committee discussed the issue and Gandhiji's help was sought to hammer out an agreed draft resolution.

Gandhiji moved a resolution in the Subjects Committee of the annual Congress session on December 26 which welcomed the Nehru Committee's report and while adhering to the Madras Congress resolution declaring independence as its goal, adopted the Nehru Committee's draft constitution as a great step in political advance, provided however that the Congress "shall not be bound by the constitution if it is not accepted on or before December 31, 1930". The resolution added that in the event of non-acceptance by the British Parliament of the Constitution by that date, the Congress would revive non-violent non-co-operation by advising the country to refuse to pay taxes and every other aid to Government. Gandhiji said the resolution was an attempt to satisfy both schools of thought prevailing in the Congress on the Nehru report. Gandhiji said "The Madras resolution tells you that

independence shall be the goal. It is not a declaration of independence. You are not now working for independence which the authors of the resolution had in mind. By all means keep that word, but in considering this resolution I desire to tell you that the process of that very species of independence is accelerated by it and it is not retarded."

Jawaharlal Nehru moved an amendment repudiating Dominion Status and urging severance of British connection. He told the Committee "By this resolution of Gandhiji you are declaring that you are prepared to allow India to be exploited by British Imperialism. You want freedom for India and yet you are prepared to accept the psychology of imperialism in this resolution. You talk of Dominion Status in terms of British Imperialism as it exists today. You don't talk of India in terms of a reformed commonwealth. You will help the psychology of imperialism so long as you don't declare you will have nothing to do with it."

The Hindu gave its own view of the matter by quoting Gandhiji's words: "Freedom cannot come from stealing and it has never done so. It will only come by bleeding". Dominion Status, The Hindu said, "in so far as it connotes this freedom, will have to be won as much by our own efforts as independence which as Mahatmaji showed, is a somewhat variable quantity.

And Dominion Status far from being the enemy of Independence, the avowed goal of the Congress, will, if achieved, take the country a very long way towards Independence (in the sense in which America is, for instance, independent).

What is more important, the practical measures which will have to be taken for the attainment of Dominion Status and which Gandhiji has indicated in the latter part of his resolution are precisely the measures that even those who want nothing less than Independence will have to pursue".

Following further discussions among Congress leaders at Calcutta a compromise was reached and Gandhiji moved an amended resolution which gave positive approval to the whole of the Nehru constitution while adhering to the resolution on Independence passed by the Congress in Madras in 1927. The compromise resolution reduced the time given to Britain to consider the demand from two to one year. Another change was the permission given to Congressmen to preach the Independence demand in the name of the Congress. S. Srinivasa Iyengar seconded the compromise resolution. He said he accepted it for three reasons: (1) The resolution kept alive the objective of Independence and work for its propagation. (2) As a result of the working of the compromise he hoped that the schools of thought in the Congress would unite to work for Independence. (3) He hoped the Independence for India League would receive cordial and continuous support from all sections of the Congress. The Bengal delegates led by Subhas Bose refused to accept the compromise resolution and accused Srinivasa Iyengar of not consulting members of the Independence League before agreeing to it, a charge which Srinivasa Iyengar hotly denied.

Jawaharlal Nehru did not attend the debate on the resolution and his absence was thus explained by Gandhiji in the course of his speech in the Subjects Committee. "Jawaharlal was not in sympathy with much that was going on in our midst. He has become impatient to throw off the yoke. All the 24 hours of the day he simply broods upon the grievances of his countrymen. He is impatient to remove the grinding pauperism of the masses. He is

impatient against capitalists who are exploiting the masses, who rule over the country and exploit and bleed the country I may tell you frankly that he is not in sympathy even with this resolution. He thinks that this resolution itself falls far short of what he wants. He is a high-souled man. He does not want to create unnecessary bitterness of words. He seeks deliverance out of it by putting a self-imposed silence upon himself. Hence you find that although he is a faithful and diligent secretary of the Congress he feels that it is better for him this morning to absent himself than to be a helpless victim of the proceedings with which he is not in agreement."

Gandhi's resolution was adopted by the Congress and The Hindu welcomed it and castigated the Independence Wallas for backing out of the compromise. "We are not concerned here with the domestic infelicities of the League which seem to have given rise to the alleged misunderstanding, but what we cannot help observing is that their eleventh hour resolve to back out of the compromise that had been reached after infinite effort and patience on both sides was scarcely compatible with the exercise of that high sense of responsibility from which Mr. Subhas Bose and his friends professed to be acting and of which we have no doubt they are as a rule acutely conscious as leaders of the youth of the country. Mr. Bose made a fine plea for freedom to the younger generation to act according to its convictions. The older leaders will be the last to deny this freedom or to question the sincerity of conviction that has animated the younger men to strike out an independent line for themselves. In so far as the voting on Mr. Subhas Bose's amendment indicates a determination on their part to think out for themselves the clamant problems before the country and not to be coerced into a course of action repugnant to their deepest convictions by the prestige attached to great names, it is certainly to be welcomed and should serve to refute the silly notion sedulously propagated in certain quarters that the Congress and other national organisations are being dominated by a few men to whom the rank and file give a sheeplike allegiance. Nevertheless, we feel that this display of a difference of opinion in Congress ranks might have been avoided with advantage. For while it hinges on an issue which as Mahatmaji has repeatedly and convincingly pointed out is unreal, it is bound to be exploited by the opponents of Indian freedom for their own purposes and it has unfortunately diverted attention from the much more important communal question."

At the All Parties convention in Calcutta on December 28, 1928, Jinnah's amendments to the Nehru constitution regarding one-third representation for Muslims in the Central Legislature and in the event of adult franchise not being granted to reserve seats for Muslims in Punjab and Bengal on a population basis were rejected. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, one of the authors of the Nehru Report, said "It seems to me you are faced with an occasion when the first and last question should be to bring about unity. The simple position is that for the sake of settlement you are invited by Mr. Jinnah, however illogically and unreasonably, to agree to this proposition which I consider is not inconsistent with the Nehru report. Speaking for myself I would like you to picture Mr. Jinnah whom I have known intimately for 15 years. If he is a spoilt child, I am prepared to say 'give him what he wants and be finished with it'. I am going to ask him to be reasonable but we must, as practical statesmen, try to solve the problem and not be misled by arithmetical figures."

Jinnah in his reply to the debate said "When a nation is struggling for freedom, when people are under foreign rule, you have to face the problem of minorities and any constitution you will frame will not receive the support of minorities unless they can feel they are secure . Please don't think I am threatening you, because I am liable to be misunderstood. If we don't settle this question today, we will settle it tomorrow We are sons of the land and we have to live together We have to work together and whatever our differences may be let us not arouse bad blood If we cannot agree let us agree to differ but let us part as friends Nothing will make me more happy than to see Hindus and Muslims united I believe there is no progress for India until Muslims and Hindus are united Let not logic, philosophy and squabbles stand in the way of your bringing that about"

The Hindu urged that the Muslims, "as becomes their position as one of the two largest communities in the country, should exhibit a greater foresight and spirit of accommodation in this matter and thus set a worthy example to the lesser communities. No one enjoys more than Mr. Jinnah the power and prestige which should induce his fellow Muslims to recognise the validity of this aspect of the question, no one will question the genuineness of his desire for a lasting settlement The League has under his leadership shown by refusing to be drawn into the ranks of reactionaries that it realises its responsibilities It is to be hoped that before the Muslim League meets next, Mr Jinnah will have succeeded in winning the whole-hearted support of his community for the Nehru proposals'

The Hindu's hopes, however, were falsified There was confusion in the plenary session of the Muslim League which met in Delhi on March 30, 1929 and Jinnah contested the announcement that a resolution welcoming the Nehru Report proposals had been passed The Hindu said "So far as any conclusion can be drawn from the inconclusive proceedings of the League which had again to adjourn its session, it would seem that a majority of the members of the Muslim League (as it is constituted at present) who attended the session that has just terminated are frankly in favour of the Nehru report but would press for modifications which all Muslims desire and strive their best to come to an agreed settlement with the Hindus with regard to these modifications We would most strongly urge Mr Jinnah in particular to recognise the obvious facts of the situation and to take the lead in completing and consolidating national unity that was brought about last year in such a large measure by putting himself at the head of the progressive and nationalist sections of his community. While negotiating with the Hindus for an agreed settlement it is his plain duty to persuade his own community to purge itself of non-national, sectarian and reactionary elements by pointing out how essential this is for the achievement of Swaraj and by convincing it of the protection and safeguards that would be provided for its religious rights and legitimate communal privileges"

On March 12, 1929, the Central Legislative Assembly carried Motilal Nehru's motion censuring the Government for not responding to the National Demand Jinnah whose party voted with the Congress and the Nationalists, made it clear that the Muslims did not accept the Nehru Report but whatever form the national demand took from time to time all were agreed that there should be responsible Government in the country with adequate safeguards and

protection to minorities "I stand here firmly", he said, "and deliberately to assert that the policy of my school of thought is the establishment of responsible Government, nothing less, nothing more"

The Hindu hoped that the success achieved in the Assembly "will be made the starting point of another great effort such as was inaugurated last year for completing the process of political and communal unity which should manifest itself not only in the presentation of the national demand but also in laying a firm foundation for joint action in the strenuous days that are ahead"



**T**HE HINDU was 50 years old in September 1928. "Proudly conscious as we are", The Hindu wrote on its birthday, "of our onerous responsibilities as the inheritors of a great tradition and looking as we do for daily inspiration and guidance to the fragrant memory of the great men who so largely made The Hindu what it is, the heartfelt tributes paid to the two stars of the first magnitude in the Indian journalistic firmament — the late Messrs. G. Subramania Aiyer and S. Kasturiranga Iyengar — and the eminently fitting way in which the public of Madras have decided to perpetuate their memory, are doubly precious to us. Those great men are the beacon lights who shine far into the future with their radiant message of hope and faith; we into whose hands their sacred charge has passed are but humble feeders of the flame. Honest and fearless criticism of men and measures untainted by personalities and directed solely by consideration of the common weal will in the future as in the past be our constant aim. And it shall be our endeavour to fight with all the strength and skill that may be vouchsafed to us for the freedom of the motherland, to uphold all causes that are deserving of support and to contribute all that we can to that fullness of life of which a great nation is born. We are acutely conscious of the immensity of our task, but the thought while it chastens, need not deflect us from the goal sustained as we are by the knowledge that the country expects The Hindu to do its duty and is prepared to back it nobly in the strenuous days ahead".

A function to mark the landmark in the history of The Hindu was held at The Hindu office on October 7 at which a gold cup was presented to the proprietors on behalf of the staff. Speaking on the occasion, V. S. Ramaswami Sastri, Senior Assistant Editor, said he used to place his ideas on how the newspaper should be run before Kasturi Srinivasan who would jump at them if they were good, asking him to go ahead whatever the labour and cost they involved. Mr. Srinivasan told him he was anxious to produce a first class national newspaper which would be worthy of India, neat in execution and skilful in presentation of facts, the staff taking care in gathering news and filtering them. Ramaswami Sastri said: "The proprietors of The Hindu have that business instinct which has enabled them to place the greater proportion of their realisations into the paper itself. And that has contributed not a little to the equipment of the paper about which we are hearing so much".

R R Bashyam Iyengar, Senior Sub-Editor, said "As a senior member of the news staff I am bound to tell you now how happy we feel at the parental care, brotherly kindness and generous sympathy shown to us by our proprietors. The greatness of our proprietors lies in overlooking many of our faults and appreciating what little bit we are able to contribute to the greatness of our paper and rewarding us all as we may merit"

K P Viswanatha Aiyer, Assistant Editor, quoted Fenner Brockway, the well known Labour member of Parliament and friend of India, as saying that in *The Hindu* he found the Manchester Guardian of India. K Srinivasan combined in himself the organising capacity of Northcliffe and the professional esprit de corps of Scott. In his reply K Srinivasan said "We are certainly a happy family in every sense of the term"

At a public meeting held at the Gokhale Hall, Madras, on the same day an address was presented to *The Hindu* on behalf of the people of Madras Presidency offering felicitations on the Jubilee. The address said "We recognise it is a great event in the history of Indian journalism for an Indian owned and Indian edited newspaper to complete a record of 50 years of continuous existence and this is an occasion of which you and the public whom you serve should legitimately be proud. Starting from small beginnings and struggling against great odds the early history of *The Hindu* to create and consolidate public opinion when there was none, is really the history of the growth and development of public life in this presidency, and if today Madras pulsed with life and plays no small part in the evolution and emancipation of India, all credit is due to the noble mission nobly undertaken by the founders of *The Hindu* and faithfully discharged by them and their successors"

The address concluded "The Hindu is of the nation, born of the nation, bred up by the nation and issuing out of the National Press. Long may it continue to serve the motherland! Long may it prosper to spread truth and knowledge in the country!"

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, who was one of the speakers, referred to the refusal of the London Times to publish a letter jointly signed by prominent Indians, protesting against Miss Mayo's book "Mother India" and also Mrs Besant's unsuccessful efforts to enlist British Press support for India's freedom fight and said "In the whole career of *The Hindu* I think it may be stated that no controversy, no fight, no issue which you want to articulate from your own points of view has been denied a hearing. The Editorial policy might be favourable to a particular programme but nevertheless the hospitality of its columns was generous and spontaneous. A great paper has not the right to exist unless it has evolved and has resolved to maintain a consistent, courageous, firm and deliberate policy which for the past 50 years has been the hallmark and characteristic of *The Hindu*"

Kasturi Srinivasan in his reply referred to a letter written to him by his late father from board the ship en route to England (already referred to in a previous chapter) and said he was strictly following the wise words contained in the letter.

In the jubilee supplement published by *The Hindu* were hundreds of messages from far and near and from high and low testifying to the remarkable popularity of the paper and the great place it occupied in the hearts of its readers. While Dr. M. A. Ansari, Congress President, said "The Hindu is a

great masterpiece of Kasturiranga Iyengar", Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer declared "The Hindu has evolved into a journal which is unsurpassed in India for its variety of information, its upto-date character, and above all its undaunted criticism of men and affairs which is strong without ever transcending the limits of good taste and decorum. In fact its self-restraint is one of the finest characteristics of The Hindu's traditional policy"

J. T. Gwynn, I.C.S. (Retired), a frequent contributor to The Hindu said: "What gives The Hindu a peculiar value among all the dailies in India is the insight into the inner life of India which it gives. That is far more interesting and in the long run far more important than political activities which in India as elsewhere are merely superficial manifestations of the forces that work below"

Dr. C. R. Reddi called The Hindu a "symposium able and well compiled of the world's views and news. As an intellectual force The Hindu is almost supreme and intellectuals do not easily suffer from fever heat and hysterics"

A reader, who signed himself Picins, wrote to The Hindu on October 12, 1928. I have been a subscriber, practically continuous, of this newspaper from my early student days. In those days The Hindu used to take from me Re. 1.40 per month by way of reduced student subscription. It may not have been a commercial proposition to supply the journal at that rate but from my point of view it was an appreciable item of expenditure. I complain not only of this drain which I submitted to with pleasure, but The Hindu took quite a good two hours of my time almost every day. I am sure that if I did not get more prizes or pass my examination with greater distinction that was due to The Hindu which in those days as now was my jealous mistress who would not allow of attention to anything else until her last drop of sweetness was sucked. . . . If I did not distinguish myself at the bar that again was due to The Hindu which as before engrossed me daily for two hours. The Hindu has another aspect of annoyance to me. The District officers who camp in the Travellers Bungalow nearby have to be sent The Hindu daily by me for they will not wait till they can receive their own copies redirected the next day. If as a judicial officer, I am not pronouncing judgments the very next day that again is due to The Hindu. If the Government and the High Court are serious that the judges of the lower court should deliver their judgments normally in not more than a fortnight they ought to forbid their reading The Hindu or at least prevent their getting the journal in the mornings. . . . If any friends and relations do not get their replies at once that also is due to The Hindu. . . . Unless a decree granting a perpetual injunction against The Hindu expanding in size and quality is obtained, private and public interests will be placed in ever increasing jeopardy"

The Hindu had indeed expanded and provided every day many hours of unalloyed education and pleasure as the reader had "complained". Early in January, 1927, the Hindu Literary Supplement made its appearance every Wednesday of the week under the care and supervision of N. Raghunatha Aiyer who was responsible for its being talked about and appreciated in international circles. The highest qualified and most gifted intellectuals of the land reviewed books for it and wrote articles on literature. So great was its popularity that it had an independent circulation. A Saturday short story feature was another attraction, the most notable contributors to which were Hilton Brown, I.C.S. and S. V. V. (S. V. Vijayaraghavachari). Hilton Brown, a true

bureaucrat and no lover of the nationalists was still fond of India and her people and his short stories had South Indian characters and atmosphere which made them delightful cameos of South Indian society. S V V, who was a discovery of *The Hindu*, was a lawyer of Tiruvannamalai whose humour and wit had a native quality which made his short stories good entertainment for the week-end. He had been writing for *The Hindu* before off and on (some of his contributions we have already noticed) but the series of short stories which he wrote for the Saturday page were the ones which brought him fame and name. Most noteworthy of them was the one under the title "My Wife" which really consisted of many stories. We shall speak more of him in another chapter.

There was a weekly women's page too which was devoted to women's welfare and education. A weekly trade and industry review from a Special Correspondent in London which many years later was rechristened as Engineering page provided valuable information to businessmen and industrialists. Those were days when India was very much interested in what was happening in Europe and *The Hindu* had Correspondents in the more important capitals like Berlin, Paris and Geneva whose fortnightly or monthly letters were full of information on political, economic and social trends. In London was a very capable and veteran Correspondent Frederick Grubb who joined *The Hindu* in 1911 and wrote every week. Dr. Sudhindra Bose was to cover America for *The Hindu* two years later and he continued as its Correspondent for a long time. Supplementing the material provided by its Correspondents and news agencies were extracts from leading foreign journals which had been a regular feature of *The Hindu* from the days of G. Subramania Aiyer.

Another feature which entertained the reader was the pictorial jokes at the bottom of the page culled mainly from foreign journals. *The Hindu* published cartoons occasionally but the reader had to wait until 1936 when David Low's cartoons, with their All India copyright for *The Hindu*, became one of the most popular features of the paper. Technically *The Hindu* saw much improvement and in 1928 a new rotary which could print a 24 page paper at 30,000 copies an hour was installed and another addition to the press room was a battery of new linotype machines.

Photographs became a normal fare of the daily *Hindu*. On January 7, 1928, the paper carried a full page of pictures with the caption, "Soviet Russia today". The pictures were taken by E. M. Newman, an American author, during a 70,000 mile-trek in Soviet Russia and were the first uncensored pictures taken out of the country after the Soviet Revolution. *The Hindu* had also the distinction of carrying exclusively Jawaharlal Nehru's articles on Russia after his first visit to that country in 1927.

*The Hindu* in the 1920s did not suffer from some inhibitions which were noticeable in later years. Thus it carried pictures of the ex-Maharaja of Indore and his American fiancée Miller and also extensive reports of the prince's romance which would have been unthinkable ten years later. Also *The Hindu* published photographs of wedding couples and of Indian men and women going to and coming from foreign countries (which incidentally was then, and perhaps still, is considered as a status symbol). There were also group photographs of social functions like parties to and entertainment of V. I. Ps and head pictures of successful officials, I.C.S. winners and non-officials. In 1926

there was a pageful of pictures of the marriage of the Governor, Lord Goshen's daughter in Madras

A Rangaswami Iyengar came back to The Hindu as Editor in January 1928, relieving K Srinivasan of an additional burden which he was shouldering besides his administrative and managerial tasks. Rangaswami Iyengar had a galaxy of Assistant Editors to help him. They were three and we have already mentioned their names, V S Ramaswami Sastri, K P Viswanatha Aiyer and N Raghunatha Aiyer. Ramaswami Sastri was an expert on Indians abroad and wrote about their problems and also looked after letters to the Editor column.

He seemed to have been fond of letters and they covered sometimes two or three pages of The Hindu. The tapals were sent to his house and he personally opened them and disposed of them. Viswanatha Aiyer wrote on financial and economic subjects and was in charge of the commercial page. He was really a jack of all trades and it was to him the Press Superintendent went if the Editorial columns were short of matter. He could always type a "quickie" as it was called on any subject. Raghunatha Aiyer was the strong man of the team and he was a true successor to S Rangaswami in style and thinking. As days passed Raghunatha Aiyer became the most important and dominating among the Editorial writers and he mostly shaped the policy of The Hindu in the crucial years of the struggle for freedom. Raghunatha Aiyer was also in charge of mofussil news which he fostered and developed. Not so high up in the hierarchy but still a very important limb in the newsroom was R R Bashyam Iyengar who took care of foreign and Indian telegrams and headed the news desk. The Chief Reporter was a very essential part of The Hindu set-up and he and his assistants were, as was said of the Manchester Guardian, the real strength of The Hindu. It may be said of The Hindu reporting staff what was said of another English newspaper, "Public men could and did vehemently complain what the Guardian said about them, they rarely complained that they had been misreported". Much of the power and prestige of The Hindu came from its reporting staff, who, to use a quotation describing reporters in another newspaper, "were trained to be self-effacing men, rigidly impartial and impersonal in their work".

In December 1927, the first of the great Chief Reporters of The Hindu, R Ganesa Aiyer retired. He had entered the service of the paper shortly after Kasturiranga Iyengar took over the paper in 1905. There is no information about reporters of The Hindu prior to 1905. Ganesa Aiyer was a man of integrity and loyalty and the white and brown bureaucrats of those days could not easily browbeat him. He plied his trade of gathering news without fear or favour and he was responsible only to God and his editor.

Sir Norman Marjoribanks, First Member of the Governor's Council, once asked him, "Why do those buffaloes sitting in the Press Gallery write such nonsense and misrepresent me? How is it only you, Aiyer, manage to report me correctly?" "We strain our ears to the utmost in the Press Gallery, sir", was Aiyer's reply, "yet we can't hear you. Kindly raise your voice a little out of sympathy to us. I fortunately know your mind and anticipate the nature of your remarks. I build up my report on the basis of a few words here and there — and I consider myself fortunate that all my reports meet with your approbation".

When The Hindu got into trouble with Lord Willingdon, Governor of Madras and Government House news and circulars were withheld from The Hindu,

Ganesa Aiyer was sent to meet the Private Secretary to the Governor about it. He did a good job and the Editor was pleased with the way he handled the Private Secretary. The ban on *The Hindu* was removed after this interview. The *Hindu* wrote an editorial on Ganesa Aiyer's retirement paying a tribute to his long service to the paper.

*The Hindu* did not always confine itself to writing about the high and mighty in the land and abroad. Occasionally it came down to plead the cause of the humble and the poor. In a comment on the All India Postmen's Conference it said: "The Indian Postmen are a class of public servants who deserve well of the country. That they are a painstaking, conscientious and careful lot is admitted on all hands, by their official superior like Mr. Sams no less than by non-official leaders like Mr. Jinnah. It is a tribute to their honesty that subject though they are at times to several temptations and always rigorous tests, the percentage of culprits among them is, taking their numbers into account, well nigh negligible. It is but right that the state should reckon all these facts in dealing with their representations in regard to pay, allowances and pay prospects and we hope that the resolutions of the postmen's conference will receive sympathetic consideration at the hands of the authorities in Delhi."

*The Hindu* paid a gracious tribute to its arch rival and critic, *The Madras Mail* on its completion of 60 years in December, 1928. "Successive able and talented editors who have brought the paper to its present eminent position, have been inspired by the desire to interpret public opinion as they saw it and comment on men and things without fear or favour. We have had to differ from the views or comments of the *Madras Mail* frequently but its criticisms have always been marked by fairness and moderation. Steady, bright and well informed, our contemporary has always striven to maintain the highest traditions of sound journalism and we have every confidence that its future will be even more useful and successful."

In an equally nice gesture, the Editor of the *Madras Mail*, A. A. Hayles, speaking at a function in the city at which the Editor of *The Hindu*, A. Ranga-swami Iyengar, also participated, said he considered *The Hindu* the best Indian journal in India. It approached in its features and make-up first rate Western journals, he said.

When the Raja of Panagal, leader of the Justice Party, died in December, 1928, *The Hindu* carried the story on six columns with a two-column picture. It fully reported the funeral orations by leaders of all parties. In a tribute to the Raja it said: "Essentially a conservative by instinct and training, he showed a remarkable ability to perceive the trend of the popular upheaval in our province no less in social than in political matters and he showed consummate strategy and great ability in maintaining the influence and integrity of his party when the mantle of leadership fell on him after the death of Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetty a few years ago. In many respects he was a contrast to the other leader who was frank, outspoken and vehement in his life and conduct. The Raja Saheb was, on the other hand, always reserved and restrained, tactful and polished to a degree, and his courtesy and consideration to friends and opponents alike has always been marked."

Under the system of dyarchy which prevailed in the provinces under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms scheme, the reserved half of the Government

which was not responsible to the Legislature, could be arrogant, irresponsible and supercilious and Indian members, unfortunately, were greater offenders in this respect than their white cousins, as The Hindu pointed out. Here is a sample of questions and answers in the Madras Legislative Council on March 2, 1929 on action taken against some women fruit-sellers in the city.

Dr B S Mallayya Will the Hon the Law Member be pleased to call for information and state (a) whether the following women fruit-sellers of Esplanade were fined Rs. 10 each on Saturday, November 24, 1928 by Mr K Padmanabha Naidu, Honorary Magistrate (the names were then given); (b) what the offence was for which they were prosecuted and fined, (c) whether it is a fact that these women were not allowed to go out to arrange for the payment of the fine and (d) what the alternative sentence was in each of these cases?

A (a) to (d) The Government do not consider it necessary to call for information.

Dr Mallayya asked whether Government did not consider that this was a matter which lowered the prestige of the British justice in India — this reckless way in which the Magistrate fined them.

Mr Krishnan Nair (Law Member). It does not.

Dr Mallayya Will he furnish the information seeing that a member of this house has asked for it in the interests of the public?

A The question has been answered.

In reply to Mr Kaleswara Rao, the Law Member said that the Magistrate in question was a qualified man of considerable experience.

Mr K R Karanth Was not Dr Mallayya equally so?

The Law Member Not with reference to this particular matter.

The matter had a sequel some days later when Dr. Mallayya asked Will the Hon the Law Member be pleased to state what was the punishment awarded to Mr White for shooting a coolie in the Madras Port Trust compound last year?

A A fine of Rs 300 in default to suffer simple imprisonment for six months.

In reply to Mr A Ranganatha Mudaliar, the Law Member said that the Government had addressed the Public Prosecutor in the matter of the enhancement of the sentence. Mr Harisarvothama Rao asked whether the instructions were that enhancement should be asked for.

Law Member I want notice.

Dr. Mallayya Is there to be one law for white and another for Dimmakka (the fruit-seller on Esplanade who was sentenced to imprisonment)?

Mr Satyamurthi Of course, you must have known it.

The Hindu chastised another Indian member of the reserved half, Sir Mahomed Usman, for a speech in the Council. "It was utterly unworthy", it wrote, "of Sir Mahomed Usman to have let himself go in the manner he did during the debate on the cut motion in respect of the police grant yesterday. It may appear very clever of him to indulge in declamations against popular leaders and their agitation, but what he conveniently forgets in doing so is that the preferment he now enjoys would not have come in his way even in the wildest of dreams but for the "shouting at the beach". The irony of the situation will be felt to be all the more piquant if it is remembered that while quarters from which such contemptuous references used to emanate have begun to develop a sense of regard and responsibility to the voice of the

people, there should be found Indians ready, from their giddy heights, to talk sneeringly of popular leaders and popular movements"

An incident in the Central Assembly during this period highlighted the strained relations between the representatives of the Government and popular leaders. On March 20, 1929 there was a tug of war between the Government and the Congress Party when filibuster tactics were adopted by Congress speakers to prolong the debate on the Finance Bill for lack of understanding between the Government and the Opposition for postponing the Trades Dispute Bill as a means to hasten the conclusion of the debate on the Finance Bill. "Scenes unparalleled in the history of the Assembly", wrote the Special Correspondent of *The Hindu*, "were then witnessed. There was continuous thumping of tables (during the speech of Pandit Thakurdas Bhargava, Congressman). Mr Bhargava fully realising that the debate must be closed spoke rapidly. But a few minutes later there were again thumping of tables and cries of "sit down" from the official and European benches. This was resented on the other side and as Pandit Motilal expressed it, put their backs up and forced them from one of closing the debate to an attitude of preparedness for an all night sitting. When the Finance Member, Sir George Schuster, rose to speak he was faced with continuous interruptions and thumping of tables. President Patel's appeal to the opposition to be reasonable was met with a retort from that quarter that the other side had not been reasonable. Pandit Motilal gave a clear hint to the Chair that his party was not prepared to listen to the Finance Member when the Government side was not prepared to listen to a member of the Nationalist party. Sir George's attempt to still the Opposition by his loud voice also failed and the President exercised his special powers to adjourn the house till tomorrow"

*The Hindu* said: "The Opposition appears to have persisted in its interruptions not because it wanted to show any discourtesy either to the Chair or to the Finance Member but because it wished to teach a lesson to those sitting on the Treasury Benches that gagging of members by deliberate obstructionist tactics against which the President was powerless was a game at which two can play"

In January, 1929, *The Hindu* feared that the country was on the eve of another period of bureaucratic repression which in India "seems to obey a definite law of periodicity". The paper referred to the wholesale and indiscriminate "arrests, torture and tyranny" in the Punjab, sedition hunt in Madras and plans for repressive measures elsewhere. It also mentioned the reported preparation of the Government of India to push through a Public Safety Bill through the Assembly to suppress the movement of independence. "The Government would also seem to be encouraged", *The Hindu* said, "in the adoption of a high handed policy by two considerations — that India as a whole will not make a united and firm stand against any exhibition of 'firmness' and secondly by the profound mistaken belief that the differences of view-points within the Congress may make its opposition to any repressive action that the Government might take against the advocates of independence less effective than otherwise. As for the Congress we may safely predict that if the bureaucracy should be so foolish as to embark on repression in the belief that there are splits in the Congress ranks, it would be disillusioned pretty quickly and most disconcertingly"



As predicted by *The Hindu*, the Public Safety Bill, a repressive measure intended against freedom agitators, was introduced in the Central Assembly and referred to a select committee by a majority of 11 votes. *The New Delhi Correspondent* wrote "There were as many as 11 absentees from the Congress party and two from among nationalists and Mr Jinnah's absence resulted not only in the loss of his vote but also in the loss of at least two or three more votes which were cast on the Government side"

*The Hindu* rebuked the Congress members who deserted their posts of duty and said "While it is unnecessary to take too tragic a view of yesterday's voting we cannot too strongly criticise the attitude of those Congressmen who absented themselves from the session in spite of repeated summonses on various pretexts the validity of which we are not concerned to discuss here. No duty could be more urgent than that of resisting with all the power at our disposal what was truly described by Pandit Motilal Nehru as a dastardly blow aimed at personal liberty which may easily fall on nationalism in general and on the Congress in particular. If the Congressmen had attended in full strength sufficiently early the Assembly might have unequivocally refused to associate itself with this menace to popular liberties even though handicapped by the regrettable absence of Mr Jinnah and the consequent defection of some of the Muslim votes. There devolves therefore a double responsibility on Congressmen to strain every nerve to throw out the bill at the third reading so that should the Government even after such a reverse persist in putting it on the statute book by executive fiat their cussedness may stand self-exposed to the world".

Two bombs were dropped in the Assembly on April 8, 1929, as the President, V J Patel rose to give his ruling on the Public Safety Bill whose legality while the trial of labour leaders in Meerut for conspiracy against the Government was going on was questioned. *The New Delhi Correspondent* wired "Hardly had the President started reading his 12 page ruling when two bombs exploded in quick succession followed by two revolver shots in the Assembly Chamber. Panic ensued and a stampede followed. The chamber was thick with smoke and amidst the noise and excitement, two comparatively young men with self-composed countenances stood up in the gallery next to the ladies' section with two police constables and a small group of excited group of visitors around. "I have done my duty to the country", one of the youths is reported to have exclaimed, adding "Look, here is my revolver". He was at once disarmed and arrested and his comrade also surrendered to the police. Both accused wore khaki shorts. Bhagat Singh is a tall handsome figure with a hat on, Buddhukeswara Dutt, the other accused, is a short statured, thick set man. It is reported both were rather familiar faces in the visitors galleries for some days past but how they have been getting admission into the gallery is a mystery"

Bhagat Singh was later executed along with two others for an earlier offence of shooting a European police officer in Lahore and became a martyr.

President Patel ruled on April 11 that the Public Safety Bill was out of order. He said no debate was possible on the bill during the pendency of the Meerut trial. *The Hindu* said the President's ruling was fully justified in the circumstances. It added that the Assembly could not pass the bill without a free debate and this would not be possible under the standing orders of the Assembly.

which prohibited members from discussing any matters under adjudication before a court. The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, however, told the Assembly on April 12 that an ordinance would be issued to enable Government to assume powers provided in the Public Safety Bill. The Hindu called the decision a "blunder which no Government which has the least regard for democratic principles can lightly bear".

The princes and their future were highlighted by the release of the Butler Committee report in April, 1929. Its two main recommendations were that the paramountcy of the British power must continue and must be left free to meet unforeseen circumstances as they arise. Secondly, that the Viceroy and not the Governor or Governor-General in council should in future be the agent of the Crown in its relations with the princes. The Committee also said that the relationship between the Paramount Power and the princes should not be transferred without the agreement of the latter to a new Government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature.

The Hindu characterised the report as "reactionary and mischievous". "The princes", it wrote, "asked for bread for themselves ignoring the claim of their own subjects and their fellow countrymen in British India. They have been given a stone that is calculated to act as a dead weight upon the progress of their own countrymen in British India and their own states in consequence. Are we to believe then that Indian princes are prepared to entrust their fate into the hands of an uninformed and unfamiliar white democracy in England instead of getting into some kind of federal relationship and treaty arrangement with British India and the future Parliament of their own countrymen? ... It is therefore necessary for the leaders of the people both in British and Indian India to immediately take steps to persuade and convince the princes of the essential wisdom and justice of their making common cause with their own subjects and with their brethren in British India and claim for themselves and for British India a Swaraj that is free from the domination, or intervention of British interests and that gives the fullest scope for the development of freedom and prosperity for the whole of India".

Again writing on the subject on another day The Hindu said: "What the princes bargained for was complete internal sovereignty, but what they are guaranteed under the report is unqualified slavery dressed up though it is in the glittering robes of royalty. We hope the princes will consider this aspect of the gift that is now offered to them. Apart from this, there is another consideration which they should bear in mind. British India must and will win freedom sooner or later. No force on earth, no matter how great its pretensions might be, can withstand the onward march of Indian nationalism for any considerable length of time. We in British India are conscious and confident of our destiny. If the princes are wise they will take no step now which does not reckon this possibility. They may defy just popular wishes now; if they do so let them remember defeat awaits them sooner or later. They cannot without peril to their economic and other vital interests adopt the policy of inglorious isolation which the Butler report contemplates for them, nor could they forget that they could not even if they wish carry their subjects with them in this policy of national self-effacement and suicide".

The Hindu in this connection quoted with approval an editorial in the Manchester Guardian "We entered into certain engagements with you

because of our position as rulers of British India. The time is coming when we must hand over the rule of British India to its inhabitants. We give you notice now so that you may make new engagements with our successors. We will help you as far as we can to get fair terms but your future must depend chiefly on your success in securing the goodwill of your subjects."

In another article in May, *The Hindu* told the Princes that the alternatives before them were two and two only — subordination which is virtual slavery and equality. Equality can be secured only by seeking a place in the Indian constitution and an honoured one awaits them for the earnest asking. The path which the Princes have so far pursued and which they have not yet departed from is unfortunately that of slavery. The future of the states seem predestined to be constitutional monarchy, if the princes allowed it to develop, and democracy in any case with membership in an Indian polity — commonwealth, federation or whatever name it may come to bear. The logic of history and of events makes that point clear and wise princes will not lack the foresight necessary to help to allow the changes to go without difficulty for their subjects and without discomfort to themselves."

*The Hindu* noted the new signs of awakening among the subjects of Indian princes. It wrote on May 16, 1929. The proceedings alike of the constitutional bodies in the Indian states such as the representative assemblies and legislative councils and of the extra constitutional organisations like the various state subjects' congresses and conferences make it clear that everywhere in "Indian India" there are signs of a new awakening. In Baroda, Travancore, in Mysore, in Cochin, in Pudukottah and in almost every state resolutions have been moved in their respective councils and other organisations and passed demanding for the people of the States a measure of self-Government in keeping with the awakening of the people and in the light of their achievement in the past. That the movement is spontaneous and that its promoters are going about their business with becoming sense of responsibility must be acknowledged by all impartial observers. It will be wisdom for the princes to take note of these developments and facilitate progress of the reform of the constitution. There is no escaping the conclusion that the interests alike of the princes and of their subjects lie in speeding up the grant of constitutional reforms in the states and we hope the princes will not be slow to realise the fact."

In a review of the proceedings of the Mysore Representative Assembly in June, *The Hindu* sharply criticised the attitude of the Dewan, Sir Mirza Ismail, to popular demands. "He (Sir Mirza) apparently does not realise", it wrote, "that the days when Mabap rule have satisfied the country are gone for ever. Hence the unfortunate situation in which he often finds himself. Good intentions and anxiety to promote progressive measures cannot in these days atone for neglect or disregard for constitutional forms and procedure. . . nor is it possible to justify the disallowance of questions and resolutions on the grounds on which Sir Mirza has done. The doctrine which he has propounded that no member might raise a question which did not directly concern his constituency is novel and wholly untenable. So also his view that the action of the chair could in no circumstances form the subject of a debate is one for which we do not think a precedent can be found. It is time Sir Mirza once for all made up his mind on the point as to whether he would be content with

being an administrator of the old Hailey bureaucratic type or whether having studied the trend of the times he would not do better to earn the reputation of having proved to be a true and farseeing statesman"

When the Labour Party was returned to power in the British general elections in May 1929, *The Hindu* featured the story and published detailed election results. It called upon the new Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald to give a better account of himself towards India than he did in 1924 when his party was in power for a brief period. "Has he the grit to rise equal to the occasion", *The Hindu* asked. "So far as India is concerned Mr. MacDonald has yet to show that he is not the opportunist of the deepest dye. His Ministerial and post-ministerial record is damagingly against him. The elaborate sophistry with which he has defended his support to the Simon Commission and his ready acquiescence in Sir Simon's proposal to put India in cold storage and lull the electorate into oblivion of that important issue were enough to establish that he was loath to do anything in vindication of his long professed desire for India's freedom that might in the least jeopardise his chances at the polls. Will he be bold enough to use the power thus gained to translate that desire into action even though it might be risking the hard won place of his party in the political life of Britain?"

The London Correspondent in a cable, which *The Hindu* featured on the leader page on June 3, reported that the indeterminate result of the British elections may have important repercussions on Indian affairs. He said the Labour leaders although consenting to the appointment of the Simon Commission had declined to be committed beforehand to its recommendations and optimists believe there will be a disposition to consider dispassionately the demand for Dominion Status if Indian opinion is shown substantially united behind it. He added that an influential group of Labour members intended to press that advantage be taken of the Viceroy's coming visit to expedite the solution and supplement the commission's work by conjoint and concurrent negotiations with representative Indians on the basis of the Nehru Report and "any Labour Government accepting office will be urged to make without delay a declaration of their desire to reach an agreed settlement satisfactory to India and securing for her full self-Government within a reasonable period"

Commenting, *The Hindu* wrote: "Our Correspondent is not accustomed to flying political kites and we have no doubt what he says is based on good foundation. India will not shut the door to any earnest attempt made to grapple with the problem on the basis of justice and fairness"

*The Hindu* was however not inspired by the announcement of the appointment of Captain Wedgwood Benn as the new Secretary of State for India (an opinion which it was to modify later). "He is among the Labourites the least conversant with India", it wrote. "His interests in Indian affairs has been mainly confined to such subjects as the army in India and Government's opium policy"

In a remarkable address to the students of the Triplicane Hindu High School in April, 1929, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri spoke of the hazards of being a politician and said not every one could be a politician with success. Sastri, who as we have already seen was at the wrong end of the stick so far as *The Hindu* was

concerned, had been for a change lauded by the paper for his work in South Africa in the cause of Indians there and been welcomed home after completion of his mission

Sastri said "I discovered that in the field of public service there are a great many other workers besides oneself. Towards the total result the factors that go are many besides the little thing that you contribute. Your responsibility therefore although it could never be nothing is comparatively small. There are others who are at work in the same field, better equipped, more experienced and wiser in the affairs of the world and you may well look to them to rectify some of the mistakes you make. Neither do the public, ignorant as they are and prejudiced and often, I am afraid, swerving from the path of rectitude, take you on that face value in which the inoffensive pupils of school do. They know sometimes how to apply the necessary corrections to what you say. They have their own key to the inner meaning of what you say. So the amount of harm you can do is limited in great many ways in public life. Although the harm is so limited, it is there and through the many hours of torment which I have undergone I may say this for the benefit of the students who listen to me. Believe me, public life is full of snares and pitfalls. It is not for everybody. It is certainly not for the ill-prepared and the ill-equipped students. It is not even for all adults. Yet we find that public life is regarded as a vast reservoir, a vast rubbish heap into which society is justified in putting anything for which it has no use. It is one of the most melancholy aspects of affairs today. There is no need to corrupt the young, to lead them into the perilous path of politics. I feel whenever I question myself, whenever I stretch myself on a bed of weariness and I cross-examine myself — have I done any good against the immense harm which I have done for the day? I leave that thought with you. Public life is for the serious minded, for the knowing, for the experienced, for the patient and for the forbearing. It is not for everybody. I pray you students who are preparing yourselves to become purer patriots and better servants of your community to come to the task better prepared in both body and soul. I do not rule you out of politics. But come there prepared to serve and not merely to add to the confusion which often is undistinguishable from chaos."

Sastri presided over a huge function organised by Nagarathars to felicitate Sir S. R. M. Annamalai Chettiar on the hereditary title of Raja conferred on him by the British Government. The Hindu sent a special Correspondent to cover the meeting at Chettinad and published a six-column report. What Sastri said on the occasion is worth quoting: "For a long, long time henceforth we will not condemn the Government for conferring distinction upon undeserving individuals or for leaving undistinguished those who may be fit recipients thereof. Sir Annamalai has deserved well not merely of the Government but of the whole of India".

Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar will again appear later in these pages when The Hindu clashed with him in the field of music.

The Hindu published in April, 1929, a review by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer of Miss Mayo's "The Slaves of Gods", which was a follow-up of her notorious "Mother India". The Hindu had described "Mother India" as the "queerest and most ill-assorted farrago of untruths, half truths, old wives tales and yankee yarns that you could ever hope to see collected within the covers of a book".

Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyer wrote "Miss Mayo is not deficient in a good conceit of herself. She takes it almost for granted that the more glaring social evils inherent in Hinduism have during the past 18 months, that is, presumably since the appearance of *Mother India*, engaged the attention of educated India and she insists that she has given much aid and impetus to the Hindu social reformer. This is true but only in the sense in which mustard plaster works on the human frame by irritation. What Miss Mayo forgets is that we can forgive the wounds of a true friend like Sister Nivedita or Sir John Woodroffe but cannot tolerate the petty spitefulness of morbid minded gossips."

And now to two entertaining letters to the Editor, one advising Madrassis to go north and the other on what an ideal lawyer should be.

The reader who wrote on the "call of the North", said "Rather than huddle together here and bring down the standard of living I would earnestly appeal to my young friends to try their luck in the north. I speak from experience and observation." He said among the various Government departments where Madrassis were 'largely wanted' were railways, railway accounts, Military Accounts, Accountant-General's Office and Postal Accounts Office. He wrote "In Meerut, a Military Accounts Officer of senior rank told me 'Dispense with my establishment of 50 clerks and give me but half a dozen Madrassis, I will have time for tennis every day.' The writer added Madras shorthand reporters were in great demand all over India. "The personal clerks of the United Provinces Judicial Secretary are Madrassis, the reporter of the Central Provinces Legislative Council is a Madrassi. In every province we find Madrassi stenographers doing splendid work. In fact out of the six stenographers employed by the Simon Commission two had been brought from England and the remaining were all Madrassis".

This letter provoked many other letters on the subject. One reader from Salem wrote, "Mr Raghava Aiyer (the Correspondent) is well meaning when he asks the efficient unemployed Madrassi to evacuate Madras and seek pastures new in the north. His suggestion is laudable. His heart is in the right place. But what becomes then of the state of the unemployed north Indians who are thrown out of employment by the egregious influx of the Madrassis? I believe Mr Aiyer would suggest to them an emigration to the Malay Archipelago."

Another reader from Bombay wrote, "Although Mr. Aiyer seems to be ignorant of the real state of affairs in places like Bombay and Calcutta, so far as the South Indian population is concerned, you, Mr. Editor, are aware of the bitter feelings of animosity against Madrassis exhibited in season and out of season as also some of the orders of Government and local bodies restricting the employment of Madrassis. Those of us who have made Bombay our home and are not living there as birds of passage, more often than not are led to think whether Bombay would become a South Africa to us, considering the bitter hostility that is exhibited there."

T. Narayana Sastri, a District Court lawyer of Guntur, wrote to *The Hindu* that the ideal Hindu lawyer was one who believed in "Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavat Gita and cherishes transcendental contempt for money. His aim is the establishment of righteousness in the people. He conducts cases with divine spirit and is content with whatever is willingly given to him by the client. The ideal Hindu lawyer does not sue his client for his fee. The ideal Hindu

lawyer does not substantiate his clients' cases by false evidence, oral or documentary. He does not prosecute or defend claims known by him to be false. In short the ideal Hindu lawyer regards himself as a divine limb of the law."

A constructive criticism of the Self-Respect movement led by E. V. Ramaswami Naicker was made by a prominent Non-Brahmin leader, T. K. Pavalar in a letter to the Editor in May, 1929. "It is not the creeds and dogmas, myth and superstition, priestcraft and witchcraft only that he is fighting against", he wrote. "He cannot consistent with his principles stop with them. Religion, culture and fine arts are the props of the present system. Therefore demolish them, remove them root and branch — this is the chorus of his songs and the great commandment of his religion. Religion to him is superstition, culture is mythology, fine arts are obscenity. . . It is a new philosophy of life if it is worthy of being called so. No religion, no culture, no fine arts. Knowledge is the will o' the wisp. Ancients are knaves and fools. Nothing but my common sense has any absolute existence. All that is praised in the world is a subterfuge. This is the philosophy in a nutshell. Can anyone who has any historical sense in him accept this? Can anyone in whom there is still burning a spark of wisdom accept this philosophy of nonsense? How can any man who is ashamed of his past and who can boast of nothing in the present have any real self-respect? What is there to fill up the void created by the removal of our religion and culture? Is there not such a thing as the seed of the race? Try as much as you can, as long as you can, you can never cease to be Indians."

The variety of subjects dealt with in letters to the Editor is exemplified by the following which was written by P. Sambamoorthy, who later became a noted author and authority on Indian music. Writing in April, 1929 from Madras, Sambamoorthy defended the practice of singing *pallavi* in concerts. "Of late it has become the fashion for some people to remark both in private and in public that the *pallavi* has no place in a modern musical performance. Some others hold it is a nuisance only to be tolerated. The principal cause for all this crusade against the *pallavi* is to be attributed to the ignorance of the great beauties underlying this branch of musical art. Is it wisdom to decry such a glorious system as *pallavi*? No doubt the appeal here is to the intellect, but is there not such a thing as intellectual appreciation in music as in other fine arts and should we lose sight of that fact? To listen to a good *pallavi* rendering is a real intellectual treat."

Sambamoorthy's view was contested by another reader E. Krishna Aiyer (who also became well-known later as a music and dance critic) who wrote that "as at present sung the *pallavi* is neither a treat, nor is it intellectual. However much a thing is pretended to be intellectual unless it appeals to the heart also, it has no place in music. In most of the *pallavi* singing of the present day — with honourable exceptions here and there — it is mere noise and bull fight with the drummer".

The Hindu's numerous correspondents frequently sent stories of "miracles" and unusual and perhaps unbelievable happenings. No attempt was made to verify them or investigate, they were published just for what they were worth, leaving it to the reader to believe them or not. Thus in May the Tuticorin Correspondent reported, "Kizhanatham is a small village near Kottaram and behind the Vishnu Temple there is an extensive palmyra tope. Rumour is

strong that on a palmyra tree there some two bunches of plantains are seen for the past five days. Those who attempt to climb the tree become giddy, it is said, while they are half way and are warned by an unknown voice not to do so. In view of this strange phenomenon people have, it is learnt, begun to worship it with flowers, sandal and saffron. Enquiries go to show that the news has been confirmed by two young cyclists who have returned from the place after satisfying their curiosity."

"No Changer" Rajagopalachari continued to make good use of *The Hindu* for carrying on the Congress constructive programme from his ashram in Tiruchengode. He mainly concentrated on Prohibition which was dear to the heart of the late Kasturiranga Iyengar who had written many articles on it in his paper. In May *The Hindu* featured a communication from Rajaji in a box with the heading "Prohibition Campaign". It said "Would you like our country to be delivered from the drink curse? Then, are you willing to do some work in the anti-drink campaign? Will you obtain signatures to the total prohibition pledge from your neighbours? Getting these signatures mean that they join in the agitation to abolish all liquor shops in the country. If you feel inclined please write immediately to me and get a pledge book and begin work at once".

Dr. Sudhindra Bose, the American Correspondent of *The Hindu* who wrote weekly letters from Iowa, wrote a piece in June on Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Canada and U.S. Declaring that almost all "who have had a chance to hear Dr. Tagore are agreed that he is an unusual personality and his message is great", Dr. Sudhindra Bose wrote "At the conference of the Canadian National Council of Education and Leisure, he stood intellectually head and shoulders over all the other delegates from the British Empire. He was in a class by himself — a monarch in an empire of men of letters. I will wager that when I die and go to heaven, I shall find all the Conrads, Kiplings and Wells gladly and proudly holding the regular job of shining the golden slippers of Rabindranath Tagore. If any criticism is to be made about the addresses of Tagore at the conference of National Council of Education, it is that he talked over nine-tenths of his audience's head. Perhaps he did, but what of it?"

Dr. Bose quoted a Canadian journalist as writing of Tagore. "He spoke constantly in epigrams not with the intention of being clever, as is often the case with epigrammists, but because there is a natural tendency on the part of the fertile minds to revert to epigrams in order to say a great deal in a short space".

Dr. Bose went on to quote Tagore's reply to those who said that the spiritualism of India was not a remedy for the materialism of the West. "There are many men in the West", Tagore said, "with the highest ideals and I have known many of them. My idea is that there is as it were a great planet dragging at the minds of the present, a huge planet with its gravitation distracting our thoughts and endeavouring towards a path which is not the normal path of mankind. Everywhere an enormous profit is demanded and that was never so in former days. In every department of life men are struggling to make big profits. Authors have the ambition to become very rich, too frequently they do not write for the love of writing. Intellectual life has been invaded by this desire for riches. This is not so strong in scientific life as in creative literature. Satan has entered in as in the day of the Garden of Eden and in the guise of ambition



In the middle ages people looked down upon money making. If a man had no other interest than to make money — such as the money-lenders — he was despised. It is a terrible hypnotism and it is working in men's minds all over the world."

Dr. Bose reported Tagore as saying that while science had made tremendous contribution to modern progress there were some aspects of it which were disastrous. "Science today", Tagore said, "has offered humanity a bribe whose proportions are so magnificent that man is not ashamed to accept it and sell everything for it which is of higher value in his nature, his home, his philosophy, his happiness and has become a tenant in the office room of his own making."

On the same page as Dr. Sudhindra Bose's letter was published the Geneva Correspondent's news letter which referred to H. G. Wells' address to the German Reichstag in which this passage occurred: "On the day when a man — with a ton of goods — can travel from Cardiff to Vladivostok or from Moscow to San Francisco as he can travel now from San Francisco to New York without a passport and without a customs examination and without seeing a single battleship on the sea, a single soldier in uniform, or a single warplane in the air, the chief structures of world pax will exist. And until he can do that the great peace will still be unachieved."

Dr. Sudhindra Bose came to the U.S.A. from India as a cook in an oil steamer in 1904. Soon after arrival he renounced his British citizenship and became a fully naturalised American. The Oriental Immigration Law of 1924 deprived him of that citizenship. He was a quiet mannered man and prided himself on being a "friend of the world and a messenger of world brotherhood". Before coming to America he was engaged in journalistic work in India. He was one of the most regular Correspondents of *The Hindu* and his monthly letters were written in a scholarly style.

A distinguished visitor to Madras in the first week of January, 1929 was the Muslim poet and philosopher Sir Mahomed Iqbal who delivered a series of lectures on Muslim theology which were published in great detail in *The Hindu*. In an appreciation, Dr. D. S. Sarma of the Presidency College, wrote: "The lectures showed an intimate acquaintance with all the modern scientific thought of Europe, with the extensive literature of mysticism as well as with the theological works of Islam. And he has brought a virile mind and a true religious spirit to bear upon his materials. . . . Though we may not agree with all that Sir Mahomed Iqbal has said and though we may doubt whether the simple verses of the Quoran addressed to the practical Arab of the seventh century could bear all the modern scientific notions that the lecturer wished to read into them, there can be no two opinions on the ability, the scholarship, the seriousness and the religious spirit shown by him in these lectures."

A significant advance in communication and speedy transmission of mail stories was achieved when the first Indian air mail plane from London landed in Karachi on April 6, 1929, bringing 560 lbs. of mail and one passenger. *The Hindu* of April 8 carried a number of Reuter stories from London dated March 29 with the by-line "By first India air mail via Karachi". There were in all 11 air mail stories, most of them of great reader interest.

# Covering the Great Dandi March

32

**T**HE AFFAIRS of Indian nationalism took a dramatic turn when at its Lahore session in December, 1929, the Indian National Congress, on the motion of Gandhiji, changed its creed to "Swaraj meaning complete Independence" and decided to boycott the legislatures as a preliminary step towards organising a campaign for Independence.

The Hindu opposed the change in creed and said "The creed has been changed in a manner which is by no means helpful to those outside the Congress who during the past two years have laboured so hard to build up a united national demand and who are still anxious to exert their best efforts to bring about an early and peaceful settlement thereof. We have always held the view, which Gokhale long ago declared, that no nation on earth can put any limitations on the national aspirations of a sister nation nor (as Lal Mohan Ghose pointed out to the Congress he presided over in Madras) can any nation be told in its onward march, 'Thus far and no further'. But we confess we are unable to agree that the change in creed is called for immediately . . . The change in creed is thus in our view premature having regard to all that has happened in regard to the promotion of communal and political unity in the country during the past two years and the need for retention by the Congress of its character as a national institution which all Indian nationalists can enter and work under for national freedom".

On January 18, 1930, The Hindu appealed to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, who it said occupied a "unique position", to continue to spare no efforts "to secure the co-operation of those who can speak authoritatively for the nation as a whole". It hoped that he would "still explore the means of re-opening negotiations with the leaders of the Congress on the basis of the All-Parties manifesto in Delhi. In any case it is to be hoped that he will not permit this desirable consummation to be balked by allowing either foolish consideration of prestige or reactionary counsels in favour of repression to prevail".

Lord Irwin had earlier made a declaration on behalf of the British Government declaring Dominion Status as the goal of British policy in India and announcing that a round table conference would be held in London with Indian leaders to discuss constitutional reforms.

The Hindu was not satisfied with the explanation given by the Viceroy regarding the plan and procedure of the R.T.C. and said "The co-operation of

nationalist India can only be had on honourable terms and collaboration such as is postulated can only be based upon the recognition of the principle that the representatives of both countries meet together on an equal footing and arrive at agreed conclusions which should be carried out as a matter of course. It is much to be regretted that in elucidating the plan and purpose of the R T C, the Viceroy has made no attempt to carry out in any reasonable manner the principles upon which any R T C ought to be based."

In an appeal to the Moderates who had accepted the invitation to attend the R T C in London, *The Hindu* said "They must make it clear that they would attend the conference only if Dominion Status is accepted as the basis of the constitution to be discussed by the conference and immediately to be brought into operation with such temporary safeguards as might be deemed necessary"

When the Congress Working Committee decided on February 15, 1930 at Ahmedabad to authorise Gandhiji to launch a non-violent civil disobedience movement, *The Hindu* was unhappy "The mass mind", it wrote, 'is admittedly not ready now to accept non-violence as an article of faith or even as the best policy, it is difficult to say at present whether by the time Gandhiji decides on mass civil disobedience the entire country would have undergone that profound psychological conversion which would justify or ensure success for so comprehensive a movement. It is in the circumstances a very serious responsibility that the organisers of the campaign have assumed"

*The Hindu*, however, warned the Government against a repressive policy and said "Every nationalist in this country whether he agrees with the present decision of Mahatmaji or not will in honour feel bound to resist to the utmost in his power anything that savours even remotely of persecution of those who are prepared to lay down their lives if need be in the cause of the country"

On March 3, 1930 Gandhiji sent an ultimatum to the Viceroy through a messenger, an Englishman, Reginald Reynolds, who was living in his ashram. *The Hindu* hoped the Viceroy and his advisers "may yet see the wisdom of accepting the basic principles of Gandhiji's proposals, even though one or two of them may be of a controversial character instead of resiling from their earlier assurances and pronouncements. It would be a fatal blunder for the Government to go on trifling with the feelings of the country at this juncture"

But even before Gandhiji launched his campaign the Government claimed its first victim in its repressive campaign in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who was arrested on March 7 in a Gujarat village for disobeying a prohibitory order and sentenced to three months' imprisonment "How can we measure the perversity of a Government" asked *The Hindu*, "that has forced into imprisonment a man so noble and practical, so skilful and keen and so anxious for a peaceful and just settlement of the great issue upon which Mahatma Gandhi has launched his great campaign?"

Gandhiji launched his Salt Satyagraha movement on March 12, 1930 when he began his great march to Dandi on the sea coast in Gujarat from Ahmedabad to break the salt law. He was accompanied by a team of men and women satyagrahis representing all parts of India.

"It is impossible for any true Indian", wrote *The Hindu*, "to whatever political school he may belong to remain unmoved by the news from Ahmedabad today announcing the beginning of Mahatma Gandhi's historic march in the great

non-violent campaign for achieving the freedom of the country. The determination and discipline shown in the steps so far taken give but an inadequate idea of the gravity of the decision he and his followers have arrived at to suffer and sacrifice for the country's cause unto the point of death by the pursuit of the most peaceful and non-violent methods. May wisdom yet guide the counsels of the Government in finding means for a just and honourable settlement of the great issue now before them"

The Hindu sent one of its senior Assistant Editors, K P Viswanatha Aiyer, to cover the Dandi March and he wired this report from Ahmedabad as the March began: "Victory or Death — with this as motto Gandhiji and his followers began their great march out of the ashram at 6.30 this morning. The ashram bells were rung earlier than usual today and inmates woke up a little earlier so that they may start on the Civil Disobedience March. The spectacle in the town was solemn and impressive. For well nigh four and a half miles from the ashram to the town, the road presented a flowing mass of humanity. Precisely at 6.20 a.m., Mahatmaji and the Satyagrahis started from the ashram. They drew up in a line, two abreast, Mahatmaji leading. In front of the ashram the procession stayed awhile singing prayer songs which included Mahatmaji's most favourite one on the Vaishnavite's faith. The music was most impressive. A seething mass of citizens was arrayed on both sides of the road, 50 and in some places 100, deep. Ladies of the ashram, who have taken the places of the men, scattered benedictory rice and kumkum on the volunteers and exhorted them to remember their motto "Victory or Death". Each Satyagrahi carried his own kit suspended from a stick. The Satyagrahis wore no uniform but their identity was unmistakable. The police were nowhere in evidence.

"No sooner was the start made than Mahatmaji set such a quick pace that it was with difficulty that the party could follow him. It seemed as though he was rushing in the attempt to grasp his goal. Thousands gathered on either side of the road and saluted the great leader and his party and wished them success."

Viswanatha Aiyer wired the story of the march daily which was featured in the paper. On the second day of the march he wrote: "For all his journey Gandhiji looks wonderfully healthy and bright and so far he has not had to use the pony meant for him." Describing the routine of the Satyagrahis he said "After prayers the march begins and on arrival at the destination the masses are addressed when the volunteers are present. The Satyagrahi then takes his meal of three *rotis*, a tola of ghee and wheat congee (gruel). He then writes his daily diary, attends to one hour sacrificial spinning, takes his turn in cooking and then looks after the part of the village assigned to him. The 79 volunteers have been divided into batches, each batch attending to a particular section of village work. One section studies village sanitation, another prepares a catalogue of village grievances, a third devotes itself to agriculture, cattle farming and dairying and industries and a fourth surveys the need of untouchables".

The Hindu devoted a whole page and sometimes two pages to reports of the Dandi March and Satyagraha stories from elsewhere. It published pictures of the March including a five-column picture showing Gandhiji leading the Satyagrahis.

The Hindu Special Correspondent said in a report on March 15 that he felt ashamed to travel in a car behind the Satyagrahis, while their leader, "the world's greatest man" was walking in an atmosphere "reeking with the thick

clouds of dust" raised by the numerical strength of his admirers and choking him to suffocation and the sun thrusting on his face its penetrating rays with increasing intensity as though it was subjecting the Mahatma to an enduring test. The whole village gathered in ever increasing crowds to the beat of strange drums and the play of stranger pipes, pressing on him as though to put his oratorical powers to the test and all the while one was following the party in a car in comfort. The reflection put one to shame."

It was clear that Gandhiji would not be interfered with till he reached Dandi, said the New Delhi Correspondent who learnt from enquiries in Government circles that "Gandhiji would not be touched till April".

As Gandhiji in the course of his march arrived at Borsad, The Hindu Special Correspondent noticed the Congress flag flying over the Borsad High School where Gandhiji and his co-workers were to be accommodated. "Does the Government allow Gandhiji to be accommodated in a Government building and with the national flag hoisted over it", he asked a local citizen. "This is Borsad", the villager replied rather surprised at the Correspondent's question. "We have a sort of self-Government. For the matter of that I have myself hoisted the national flag over European buildings and seen to it that it is allowed to fly." "Perhaps the school is a municipal or local board school", the Correspondent said. "Not at all", the citizen remarked. "It is a pucca Government institution. Things are different here from what they are elsewhere. If Vallabhbhai so orders no Government official here can obtain a match box from the bazaar. Government officials here function more under our sufferance and by our grace than of their own authority". "Whatever exaggeration there may be in these words they about express the spirit of Borsad", wrote the Correspondent.

When the Correspondent asked a village officer, who had resigned his job like hundreds of others in the province, whether he had resigned of his own accord, he replied "Decidedly. What can we do? That was the only course left to us when the leader of Gujarat, Sardar Vallabhbhai was taken away from amongst us".

The London Correspondent in a despatch on March 13 said. "With every desire in the world to acknowledge his (Gandhiji's) selflessness and sincerity they (friends of India in Britain) fail to see how the famous march to the coast and the developments which are going to come out of it will advance by one iota the cause of self-government or independence. At the best it will not be much more than a picturesque demonstration. At the worst it may lead to grave disorder and bloodshed. It may be spectacular but it is not war. It will neither persuade nor compel the Government to surrender to whatever lengths violence or non-violence may go. It is much more likely to harden their hearts and provoke reprisals which every decent man must deplore. It will also embarrass those who are working hard for a peaceful and liberal settlement of India's claims. In short despite all the idealism which inspires the movement it can only lead to failure and disappointment".

Gandhiji and his party reached Dandi on April 5, 1930. The Hindu Special Correspondent reported "As one stood facing the sea, one saw before one something like a rest-house on the beach. To the left were two or three dignified but not luxurious buildings, while to the right a few hundred yards away rather a spacious bungalow commanding an excellent view. All round

are the few houses available in the locality constituting a sanatorium. The place is Dandi, the final destination of Mahatmaji in his Salt Act disobedience campaign. It was this place that Gandhiji reached this morning at 7.37. The party consisting of Mahatmaji and his 84 satyagrahis left Karadi this morning at daybreak. To call them an army seems to be an act of sacrilege to one who viewed them closely. As I saw it advance it looked like a party of pilgrims. An atmosphere of religious solemnity enveloped them. Cheerful as the party was the members seemed to be weighed down with a sense of their peculiar responsibility. They tramped in prayerful mood with eyes fixed on the route. They did not engage themselves as they used to do before in narrating stories. Their thoughts seemed concentrated on the great purpose they had set themselves to. . . As Gandhiji entered the village the ladies, a dozen in number, approached him and one after another garlanded him with spun khadi, smeared sacred kumkum on his forehead and rained flowers on him. Mahatmaji who usually receives the garlands in his hand and deposits them by his side today allowed them to be put round his neck. He looked unusually pleased."

Gandhiji and his followers broke the salt law on April 6. "The place selected", wrote the Special Correspondent, "was a marshy stretch about two yards square where there were patches of small deposits of shining sodium chloride, impure but all the same capable of yielding common salt. The sun had just risen over the eastern horizon and was casting its mild rays all around. A party of 500 people had gathered to witness the historic ceremony. There was deep silence and save for the tick of the cameras no sound was heard. Mahatmaji halted opposite the marshy tract. There were by his side, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, Miss Tyabjee, Srimathi Mithuben Petit and Dr. Sumant Mehta. Thirty minutes after six, Mahatmaji took a handful of salt deposit. His followers did likewise almost simultaneously. Into the enclosure none had been admitted other than Mahatmaji's volunteers nor did any dare enter. The great act had been done even before the crowd which had gathered around and stood in a reverential mood had time to know that the salt law had been disobeyed."

The Hindu wrote: "The volume of support and the amount of sacrifice which the inauguration of the movement has evoked in all parts of the country is a sign which no wise administrator or statesman will ignore." The Hindu called upon the Government to "seek speedy means of settlement with those who understand and interpret the real mind of the country. . . The country is sick and sore at the continued delay and disappointment caused to its repeated efforts by the ordinary methods of agitation to achieve the realisation of its demand. The bitterness that exists in the country is an admitted fact and the more or less constant phenomenon of deferred hopes and of plans to delay and defeat India's attainment of freedom have instilled into the mind of the country a despair from which Mahatmaji's gospel of non co-operation has been the sole refuge. It is the faith in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership and guidance in the actual plans of non co-operation that has produced the present response to the civil disobedience movement."

Interest in Gandhiji's movement, both internally and internationally, was so great that the Hindu Special Correspondent, reported that the telegraph office at Dandi could not handle all the traffic. "The special staff are able doing their

best", he said, "to cope with the traffic, working day and night, but the congestion is so great that I have been obliged to curtail my messages for fear of their being delayed Yesterday, the telegraph office had sent over 16,000 words which I understand beats the record during the Prince of Wales visit and the Congress session"

Viswanatha Aiyer had an interview with Gandhiji at Jabalpur on April 10 He asked the Mahatma if a volunteer was allowed to resist when a policeman forcibly attempted to wrest the salt from his hands Gandhiji told him. "It is his duty to cling to his salt as though it was his life, provided he was not offering violence to his opponent Just as a mother would save her child against the attempts of others to deprive her of it, so should a satyagrahi cling to his salt".

The Correspondent referred to Gandhiji's statement that if women were touched by the police the whole country would be inflamed and said it has been criticised as a threat against the legitimate arrest of women "Mahatmaji laughed and said he had deliberately made the statement that the country in such a contingency would be inflamed but not necessarily into committing acts of violence When Sir S. Subramania Aiyer threw away his titles because Dr. Besant had been arrested he had been inflamed but his feelings involved no violence. It is that kind of inflammation that I had referred to"

As *The Hindu* published day after day columns and columns of reports and pictures from all over India of the Salt Satyagraha movement, it noted "There was at no time any doubt that Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent agitation would create a tremendous impression in America, Europe and the Far-East Evidence is pouring in every day that such indeed is the fact. The campaign started by Mahatma Gandhi is most decidedly gaining strength day by day And the campaign of repression started by the Government is having the inevitable effect of attracting the sympathy of all classes of people, which without the stimulating action of a counter move on the part of the Government, it would perhaps have not done, at any rate in such a short space of time"

An European bureaucrat in the south distinguished himself by trying to stem popular support to the satyagrahis by issuing two circulars one of which threatened action against those who harboured satyagrahis and the other warned those who helped or co-operated with the satyagrahis in any way with prosecution He was J. A. Thorne, District Magistrate of Tanjore, who issued the circulars as C. Rajagopalachari was leading a batch of satyagrahis from Trichinopoly to Vedaranyam on the sea coast through Tanjore Thorne said. "This gathering (of satyagrahis) includes men belonging to other districts. With their object, which is to violate the law, the people of Tanjore have no sympathy. There is no reason why persons from other districts should come to this district, break the law and cause trouble to the people of this district. Therefore it is the duty of everyone to discourage this band and withhold from them money, supplies and other help".

*The Hindu* wrote: "It is not clear whether this proposed novel method of dealing with the satyagrahis and their sympathisers and of preventing the offer of the time honoured duties of hospitality such as the villages in Tanjore district are noted for, is due to the ingenuity of the District Magistrate himself or to inspiration from above. We do trust that for the sake of the legal reputation of both the Law Member of the Government of India and the Law Member of the Madras Government this extraordinary interpretation of the section

is not their own or any of their legal advisers. On the face of it, it seems to us preposterous to assume that the satyagrahis who are going to break the Salt Law become members of an unlawful assembly from the day they express their desire to do so or will become members of a group of people unlawfully assembled to commit an offence until at least they assemble on the spot with the common and immediate object of jointly committing an offence of the kind specified in section 141 of the I P C "

The Hindu added "It is difficult to believe that the people of the villages would be deterred from doing their duties of humanity by threats of consequences such as the District Magistrate has, in our opinion, most unwisely decided to promulgate among those who are subject to his authority and influence" The Hindu said "If we know the intelligent and patriotic people of Tanjore aright, they are not likely to be frightened away by this kind of mischievous and disingenuous propaganda from their adherence to the eternal dharma that those who ask for food and shelter shall not be turned away empty-handed, much less those who ask for it as of right in the name of the motherland"

The extensive publicity given to the Satyagraha movement in the nationalist Press invited the wrath of the Government of India who on April 28, 1930 promulgated an ordinance reviving the Press Act to control newspapers in dealing with the Civil Disobedience movement. The Hindu said: "Attempts to muzzle the Press have never been successful in any country and we are sure they will not be a paying proposition to the Government of India either at the present day" The Hindu added "We can certainly assure His Excellency (the Viceroy) that these are not the methods by which any Government or Viceroy can hope to lead the country into the paths of peace and orderly progress"

Writing two days later The Hindu reported that even before the text of the Press ordinance was made available to the newspapers, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi had called upon the entire nationalist Press of the city, English and Vernacular, to furnish heavy and in important cases, the maximum security permitted by the ordinance within 12 hours or cease publication thereafter. "It is difficult to exaggerate the iniquity of this action", The Hindu said, "and we are afraid that the proceedings of the Chief Commissioner and the District Magistrate are wholly illegal and ultra vires". The Hindu stopped publication for two days, May 20 and 21, 1930, as a protest against the Press ordinance, and in accordance with the decision of the All-India Journalists' Conference held in Bombay

Gandhiji was arrested at dead of night in his camp at Karadi (Gujarat) on May 5 under Regulation 25 of 1827 and removed to Yerawada jail. The news was published with a thick banner heading and The Hindu commented: "The internment of Mahatma Gandhi today under the Bombay State Prisoners Regulation of 1827 is perhaps the natural climax of the marked change of policy which Lord Irwin's Government with the support of the Labour Cabinet had inaugurated more than a week ago. . . . Neither the Government nor the public can have any doubt that the heart of the whole country will be stirred to its depths. It may, of course, be assumed that Government are fully aware of the effect of this most grave step on their part on the public mind and have determined on all those measures of firm rule and strong action which a



bureaucracy with uncontrolled power can multiply for its use. But we cannot resist the conclusion that world opinion outside India will ask — how are we to measure the unwisdom of a Government that have thought fit to put under duress the one man who stood as the apostle of peace and non-violence to friends and foes alike in his country, who by his example and precept, wherever they could reach, has extorted the admiration of all unbiased spectators who have watched the progress of this conflict from far and near. . . The dominating personality of Mahatmaji and the support it afforded Government in resisting violence have now been deliberately removed by Government. The duty imposed on the public, therefore, in consequence of his incarceration and in particular, on the leaders and workers that are in the movement, is all the greater to see that the creed of non-violence is obeyed in the letter and in spirit and that, his message to maintain non-violence even under the most trying conditions reaches all his countrymen throughout the land in a form so effective that it may serve as an object lesson to the outer world that is following the events in India with the keenest interest. We do not know that any advice or suggestion that may be made on behalf of the people will receive any dispassionate consideration from Lord Irwin and his Government in their present temper. But we shall ask them merely to give just a little thought to the realities that lie behind the outward conflict that has now resulted in the imprisonment of Mahatmaji. History will judge the statesmanship that cast into confinement one of the noblest of God's creations in India who has been not only a beacon light to the cause of his countrymen that love and adore him but has been a source of inspiration and purification to the West and East alike."

After the arrest and detention of Gandhiji, arrests and convictions of Satyagrahis continued all over the country and *The Hindu* published long reports of civil disobedience activities and also pictures of prominent Satyagrahis arrested.

As Mrs. Sarojini Naidu who succeeded Abbas Tyabji (nominated by Gandhiji as his successor) in the satyagraha campaign in Gujarat was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for her part in the raid on the Dharsana salt works on May 24, 1930, *The Hindu* wrote "The huge demonstration in Bombay last evening of those engaged in business which the police were obliged to permit and the speech made at the meeting held later by Mr. Birla proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the movement is spreading rapidly and irresistibly. Repressive measures are proving futile as they are bound to do. The birch, the baton and the jail have lost their terrors and the number of those who are prepared to suffer for the sake of the country is increasing. What can the Government hope for from persistence in their present misguided policy? The incarceration of Mahatmaji's principal lieutenants in quick succession far from embarrassing and weakening him only helped to bring about a spontaneous and unparalleled rally of the country. The Government then played what they fondly regarded as their trump card by imprisoning Gandhiji himself, but this has most disconcertingly for them resulted in endowing those left behind with a grit, patience, perseverance and solidarity which made them no longer dependent on the initiative and guidance of a handful of leaders. Today as never before Gandhiji's message has acted as a powerful stimulus to the nation's awakening and is producing sympathetic reactions. . . A way out

of the impasse lies in the Government initiating negotiations with Gandhiji. It is he alone that can deliver the goods as is admitted by prominent Liberal leaders themselves".

Sarojini Naidu spoke of the "miracle" achieved by the Salt Satyagraha when she recalled the days when she was at the side of the Mahatma in 1930 during the great Dandi march and after. Speaking in Madras in August, 1934, she asked "Has the world in the modern age seen a greater miracle than was accomplished by one little man that any of you could crush, a man so small and frail who set out, with everyone's laughter against him, with a staff in his hand saying 'I will cross into the sea in three weeks and I will break some law as a token!' Every one laughed and I laughed also. I said 'How will this little man, this foolish little man with a staff in his hand, with a struggling batch of volunteers who will weary with hunger in the sun, how will this little man fight the most powerful empire of the world?' And as the march continued, as days broke into dawn and dawn ripened into dusk, we saw before our very eyes the history of the world changing. We saw the whole of India rising up with rekindled enthusiasm and faith.

We saw the marvellous sight of thousands upon thousands of women, sheltered women, gentle women, many of whom have against their skin nothing more rough than the texture of silken cloth, we saw these women come out unafraid, fear had died, we saw them stand side by side with men, their husbands, their fathers, brothers, sons and grandsons. We saw young girls, we saw old women who had their household cares. We saw widows marching from the tragic shadows of their widowhood and we saw the army of India, the legion of freedom, fight in the name of that one fragile figure that had said 'Let me be alone if need be, but I am enough to symbolise the nation's passion for freedom'."

An enterprising British journalist, George Slocombe of the London Daily Herald set out to Yerawada to find out the Mahatma's terms for settlement. His dispatch on May 22, 1930, was published in *The Hindu* through the Bombay correspondent, Salivatiswaran who himself was the Bombay Correspondent of the Daily Herald. George Slocombe said in his dispatch:

"From the cool darkness in which he spends his days by spinning and meditation, the man revered as a saint in India by millions of his countrymen, emerged to greet me with a shy smile. During our two interviews which took place on the verandah outside his cell, the Mahatma abandoned his cross-legged posture in which he is familiar to hundreds of millions and sat on a cane chair. Otherwise he was as the world knows him, bare except for the loin cloth, brown and emaciated like the anchorite of a desert but apparently well and cheerful. Alone, spectacled, the mild and shining eyes, the mouth with its queer toothless smile and his childish trick of dropping sandal from one foot as he sat with one leg crossed rendered the strange apostolic figure human. Two things seemed to be as clear as crystal during the five hours I spent with him, his burning love and his burning hate. He loves India as he loves all mankind. He hates British domination in India as he hates evil. The British in India are for him the oppressor and the source of all maladministration and suffering. Yet he has no personal hatred for the

British or for anyone. He has warm regard for the Viceroy. He has treasured friends in England. There are even many things in British history, British character and British Commonwealth that he admires. Once India is free Britain, I suspect, will have no warmer friend than Mr. Gandhi. Place India as a free unit within the British Commonwealth, Mr. Gandhi will become a British hero as he already is an Indian hero."

Slocombe reported that Gandhi was ready for a settlement on the following terms: 1. The terms of reference of the R.T.C. must include the framing of a constitution giving India the substance of independence. 2. Satisfaction to be granted to Gandhi's demands for the repeal of the salt tax, prohibition of liquor and ban on foreign cloth. 3. Amnesty for prisoners convicted of political offences to coincide with the end of the civil disobedience campaign. 4. The remaining seven points raised in Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy to be left for future discussion.

Slocombe asked, "Is the Government prepared to make honourable peace with him? Negotiation is still possible and after my two meetings with Mr. Gandhi in prison I am convinced that conciliation will be met with conciliation but that violence on either side will compel surrender of the other. Incalculable disaster may yet be avoided by the frank recognition that the imprisoned Mahatma now incarnates the very soul of India."

The Hindu warned the Government it would be "assuming a terrible responsibility if it allowed the situation to deteriorate especially as neither Gandhi nor Congress is opposed to an honourable settlement, though it suits the Government to believe they are."

George Slocombe then saw Pandit Motilal Nehru, Congress President, and the latter told him he would recommend the Congress to attend the R.T.C., "if it was made clear that the Conference would meet to frame a constitution for a free India, subject to such adjustments of our mutual relations as are required by the special needs and conditions of India and our past association. We must be masters in our own household but we are ready to agree to reasonable terms for the period of transfer of power from a British administration in India to responsible Indian Government. We want the British people to discuss these terms as nation to nation and on an equal footing." If these terms were accepted and a wide measure of amnesty for political prisoners were granted, Pandit Motilal believed that a political settlement was possible.

The Hindu endorsing Pandit Motilal's proposals told Britain, "It is no longer any use taking her stand on constitutional shibboleths, the logic of events is proving too strong for pedantic adherence to such niceties. India asks that the British Government of the day should demonstrate its sincerity by agreeing to summon the R.T.C. for framing a dominion constitution." But Pandit Motilal Nehru was not allowed to remain outside prison very long. He was arrested in Allahabad on June 30 after the U.P. Government had declared the Congress Working Committee as an unlawful association.

It was in this explosive situation that the Simon Commission's report, which The Hindu called a "constitutional freak", was published and all India condemned it. The Hindu wrote: "After an inordinately long period of gestation the mountain has not succeeded in producing even the proverbial mouse. It has given birth to a freak, which is neither fish, flesh nor good red herring. The Commission for all its distinguished personnel has signally failed

to discharge the task assigned to it by Parliament The Simon recommendations as Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer says have to be thrown into the scrapheap"

The Commission while advocating provincial autonomy hedged in with safeguards made no recommendation for responsible Government in the Centre.

The Hindu carried comments and views on the report from leading politicians and the press in the next few days and the final word was said by the Simla Correspondent who wired on June 25 "Plans for the R T C are being pushed forward and it is held that the Simon Report only makes the task of the Conference more easy in writing on a clean slate Immense difficulty is however expected in convincing British opinion on the subject"

A significant development was the rejection of the Simon report by the Central Assembly on July 14, 1930 by a majority of 12 The motion was supported by almost the entire non-official membership except the Europeans. The Hindu drew attention to the fact that the Assembly which had rejected the report was practically depleted of Congressmen Urging the Government to come to a settlement with the Congress, The Hindu said "If they build their hopes of a settlement on the conference, they should make it possible for the Congress to attend the conference on free, equal and honourable terms"

To help the Government in the task set forth by The Hindu, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M. R. Jayakar, the moderate leaders, took on the role of peace-makers They met Gandhiji in Yerawada prison and later Motilal Nehru and his son in Nainital jail in the course of their mission On August 11, the two Nehrus were taken to Yerawada where they discussed with Gandhiji proposals made by Sapru and Jayakar When Sapru and Jayakar again saw Gandhiji, the Editor of The Hindu, A. Rangaswami Iyengar was with them and was reported by a news agency to have carried with him a book on International and Dominion relations. The two peace-makers also saw the Viceroy. But as The Hindu remarked, "it is no longer possible to doubt that the prospects of an amicable settlement are exceedingly precarious". The path of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar was from the beginning beset by the most tremendous difficulties and if these have for the present proved too much for them, the country will not be the less grateful for the patience, perseverance, tact and highminded patriotism which they brought to bear on their task Their first handicap was that the peace parleys had to be initiated and carried on without (to use a serviceable military expression) simultaneous cessation of hostilities on both sides. And developments followed with such lightning rapidity that the atmosphere instead of clearing up became surcharged with an intensity of bitter feeling which inevitably exaggerated the differences and belittled the importance of the points of contact. It is too early to apportion the blame for the impasse but it cannot be overlooked that the will to peace has been sadly lacking in the extreme elements on every side. The Simla reactionaries have strained every nerve to nullify the earnest attempts of the Viceroy to find a solution by negotiation. Partly set up by them, partly prompted by shortsighted considerations, an obstreperous section of the European community has been able, at all events for the time being, to dominate the European Association to the extent of making it retreat without any reasonable cause from the conciliatory and progressive attitude it had adopted previously towards

Indian aspirations Among Indians themselves those individuals and groups who attach importance to the attainment of sectional aims than to the realisation of the national goal saw or fancied they saw, in the peace negotiations a serious menace to the fulfilment of their own ambitions and they have done their best to frustrate them by alternately boosting the conference idea and belittling the necessity of getting the Congress to co-operate with it And lastly in the Congress itself there has been an element unwilling for any compromise, goaded by the exasperating thoroughness with which the bureaucracy has played all the stops on the organ of repression and rightly clamant for a change of heart in the whole system of Government These violent and conflicting forces have necessarily had repercussions on the peace move which regarded from any point of view must be deemed extremely regrettable since it appears there were in essentials no insuperable differences. If agreement on essentials was almost complete as is reported and only prestige stood in the way of this fact being recognised and proclaimed, we should think there is an equal responsibility on both sides to discard such false ideas of prestige and to effect an honourable peace"

The curtain was drawn on the peace parleys when in their final reply to Sapru and Jayakar, Gandhiji and the other leaders wrote "We have come to the conclusion that the time is not yet ripe for securing a settlement honourable for our country"

Jawaharlal Nehru, who was released after the expiry of his sentence, was rearrested on a charge of sedition in Allahabad on October 25, 1930 The trial was held inside the jail and the Allahabad Correspondent sent the following report

"The Magistrate, Mr. Grose, arrived punctually at 11 a m and allowed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to give his darshan to the large crowd assembled outside the portals of the prison The trial commenced at a quarter past 11. A small number of visitors and four representatives of the Press were allowed inside the court-room Pandit Motilal was present with Mrs Motilal in spite of considerable discomfort and ill-health Mrs. Kamala Nehru, Miss Indu Nehru, Mrs. Krishna Nehru and other members of the Nehru family were among those prominently seen"

The Correspondent after describing the examination of witnesses went on: The Magistrate asked Mr. Nehru "Did you deliver the speech?" "I am not taking any part in the proceedings", observed Pandit Jawaharlal, "but I do not congratulate this gentleman (C.I D. Inspector) on his powers of reporting. Probably my speech was above him I certainly consider myself a far better speaker than he makes me out to be"

Mr Grose "Do you then deny this speech as has been read out to you in toto or in part?"

Pandit Jawaharlal: "It is no question of my denying it, but my aesthetic and artistic sense is hurt. I am pained to hear that anything inartistic or unaesthetic should be connected with me".

Mr. Grose. "Do you then admit the substance of the speech?"

Pandit Jawaharlal "I do not propose to answer. I will however make a statement"

The Magistrate "Do you wish to say anything else?"

Pandit Jawaharlal: "I wish to make a statement"

The Magistrate "Is it in connection with the trial?"

Pandit Jawaharlal "Is not everything here connected with my trial?"

The Magistrate "Very well, you will read the statement and file it"

Pandit Jawaharlal. "Yes" Nehru then read his statement in which he said sedition against the present Government in India had become the creed of the Indian people

The Correspondent added "The magistrate said he reserved judgment and told Pandit Motilal he would let him know of it one day earlier at Anand Bhavan. Pandit Jawaharlal again appeared at the little window in the tower of the prison house and gave his darshan with his inimitable smile to the huge crowd below which had patiently waited for the past three hours. He then tenderly bade good-bye to his wife and daughter and embraced his father. Slowly the small group of relatives, visitors and pressmen melted away and the iron wicket gate of Naini prison closed on the distinguished prisoner"

Jawaharlal was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment on October 29, 1930. The Allahabad Correspondent reported "Quite a dramatic touch was given to Pandit Jawaharlal's trial this morning when Mr. Grose (Magistrate) directly took his seat at 11 a.m., pronounced judgment in five minutes and left the court after handing over the judgment to the accused himself who read out extracts to the members of his family, who had assembled and to the four pressmen present"

As the stage was set for the first Round Table Conference on Indian reforms in London, F. W. Wilson, former Editor of *The Pioneer*, reported for *The Hindu* from the British capital "Although many important delegates of the R.T.C. have not arrived yet, the presence in London of the advanced guard of the British Indians and the Princes has given an air of reality to much vagueness. India is beginning to creep into the news columns of papers in varying degrees of friendliness. I learn that considerable progress has been made among delegates with the preliminaries to a Hindu-Muslim agreement, the boat conversations being continued here and having reached a point where compromise propositions are being circulated. Most Hindu and Muslim protagonists are showing a spirit of reason but some yet to come may not be so helpful. No opposition to British Indian claims can be expected from the princes, who, I hear, are ready to come in immediately into an early form of federation with certain temporary reservations".

Setting out the tasks before the conference, *The Hindu* said: "It is in our view inconsistent with the basic understanding on which the Liberal and Nationalist delegates have been invited and have been persuaded to attend the conference that they should be asked to discuss seriously either the introduction of dyarchy or duality of control in any form in the Central Government or to consider the several stages or instalments by which eventually and in the long run full responsible Government may be established in this country. India's representatives can no longer therefore in the name of the country discuss any question of stages or instalments. They can only discuss the details of the Dominion status constitution and the transitional adjustments and reservations that may be necessary in putting it into operation in this country"

The Hindu urged the delegates "to ask for a definite declaration of the purpose of H.M's Government and of Parliament in summoning the conference. If this is, as they were all along led to believe, the settlement not of further stages in a long drawn process but the effecting of a lasting settlement of the future political status and constitution of this country on the basis of Dominion Status and full responsible Government — whatever adjustments and transitional reservations they may involve — they would feel justified from their standpoint to take part in it. If the declaration of purpose of Parliament in such specific terms is made by H M's Government, it may still be possible to arrest the rapidly increasing bitterness in the country and to look forward to that early participation of Congress and reconciliation that all well wishers of both countries so eagerly desire"

In another editorial on November 3, The Hindu emphasized "The R T C. is a body summoned by H M's Government for a conference and consultation with a view to carrying out the policy of establishing Dominion Status which they said was implicit in British policy in India since 1917. It follows therefore that whatever be the status of the delegates of the other British parties H M's Government have a clear duty to tell the Indian delegation at the outset the specific purposes and policies for the fulfilment of which they were invited to confer with them and to define the "grave issues" upon which they desire to submit proposals to Parliament. To argue that because the conference is a free conference every issue concerning the future of this country from A to Z is open and undefined is to make the conference a mockery and a fraud"

The Hindu added "We think that the Indian delegation as a whole should take its definite stand on the scheme and purpose of the conference itself and upon the duty of H M's Government to declare its plans and intentions in respect of India's political future. If the Labour Government do not do so but merely hope to fish in the troubled waters of Indian politics with or without the assistance of other British parties then they would be clearly acting contrary to the terms of the invitation on the basis of which the conference was originally announced and has since been summoned. That would be a state of things that must make impossible the further participation of those who have gone there on the faith of those representations"

Indian delegates had a taste of British hospitality when they attended an air demonstration at Croydon on October 26 and felt bitter about it for many days after. But let F. W. Wilson, who wired the story to The Hindu, speak "For the first time Government hospitality functioned for the R.T.C. delegates with disastrous results. The occasion was an air demonstration at Croydon for the Imperial conference delegates for whom elaborate arrangements had been made, but the Indians borne to the aerodrome in a charabanc, soon found themselves in a different category and had a splendid opportunity of seeing an example of "Dominion Status" in being. For the Indians there was no food, no rooms and no reception. Sandwiches were hastily procured and eaten "like crows on a roof" and while so engaged the Indians had a glorious glimpse of Mr Ramsay MacDonald (Prime Minister) who walked by not noticing the Government's guests. The climax of the treatment was provided by an official who asked Mr. Thambe (a delegate) if anyone spoke English! Mr Jayakar's attitude is typical 'I will accept no more Government hospitality if this is a specimen' Most of the R T C. delegates returned early, disgusted but the

incident was typical of the ignorance and indifference of the British officials to India's representatives and the complete lack of imagination in their dealing with the whole situation".

The Round Table Conference was formally opened in London by the King on November 12, 1930 "Stately formalism", cabled the London Correspondent, "marked the inauguration of the conference Everything went like clock work without any unexpected incident Despite the impressive surroundings and the distinguished audience all felt that real decisions will be taken elsewhere. Some expressions of disappointment at the indefinite generalisation of the King's speech were heard but the dominant feeling was that the conference had a good start in a friendly atmosphere all round. Mr. Jinnah was the only speaker who supplemented a prepared manuscript The nationalists regarded it as a favourable omen when he emphasized the necessity of the fulfilment of Government pledges of Dominion Status Nevertheless, communal differences remain acute. Hopefulness rather than confidence prevails"

The Hindu said the progress of the conference would be watched "for the acid test it offers to British statesmanship confronted by what has been well described as the most momentous problem of the 20th century" The paper criticised the Prime Minister's opening speech and said "We search in vain in the Premier's speech at the conference for the bare mention of Dominion Status On the other hand the dominant impression left on the mind of the careful reader by the speeches made by the members of the various Indian delegations yesterday is the fundamental unanimity that characterises their outlook on the central issue". The Hindu said "not only justice requires that India should not be denied that full opportunity for self-development which self-government alone can give; her invincible consciousness of her own right and her determination no longer to be kept out of it must convince all earnest and responsible statesmen of the crass folly of thwarting or coercing her. The Government if they do not want to go down in history as the authors of the most grievous political blunder of the age would do well to ponder the implications of His Majesty's profoundly true observation that this decade has witnessed not only in India but throughout all nations forming the British Commonwealth a quickening growth of ideas and aspirations of nationhood which defy the customary measurement of time".

Reviewing the earlier proceedings of the conference, F W. Wilson in a dispatch referred to two speeches "one of which roused those present to the realisation of India's unity and the other which marked the occasion with the lable for the future. The Maharaja of Kashmir's speech put an end to one epoch and marked the beginning of another. Speaking for all the Princes with perhaps the exception of Hyderabad, he said "As Indians and loyal to the land whence we derive our birth and infant nurture, we stand as solidly as the rest of our countrymen for our land's enjoyment of a position of honour and equality in the British Commonwealth of Nations". British Indian delegates applauded and exchanged smiles of satisfaction and the diehards looked uncomfortable and discomfited This was an end to the old policy of setting the princes against the people and to those who understood it is the initial declaration of policy which means the Princes entering into a degree of immediate unification



"The other phase was Mr Jinnah's and most people rejoiced it fell to a Muslim to epitomise the purpose of the R T C. Speaking in the presence of Dominion Premiers, he joined in the welcome, saying they would have the privilege of witnessing the birth of a new Dominion. For a moment the conference ceased to be formal and India cheered, its disunities forgotten. Again Mr. Jinnah nailed the national flag to the mast-head when he said that Indians expect the fulfilment and immediate translation into action of Britain's pledge of Dominion Status. There were fine moments of which no Congressman would have been ashamed"

Unfortunately all the earlier good impressions and prospects were wrecked on the rock of communal issue and The Hindu Correspondents at Delhi and in London told the readers of the *rake's* progress

The Delhi Correspondent wrote on December 6. A peep behind the purdah in London has yielded some interesting results and private advices from London written in frank tones state: There is a good deal of senseless stupid talk and they are all moving in a vicious circle. Orthodox Hindus are very suspicious of the other side and are afraid of their suavity. I believe the Liberals have completely played into Mr Jinnah's hands and he is certainly a more shrewd businessman than these milk and water politicians. They want a settlement at any cost. They are overweighted with their own importances though they know in their heart of hearts that none of them can collect an audience of 500 people. Most of the Englishmen, including the Secretary of State, have to know that they will have to negotiate with the Congress as none else can deliver the goods. Repression in India has not made any impression. Here the official machinery is going on in its old time honoured way. Mr Benn (Secretary of State) is anxious to meet as many leaders as he can but he finds every Indian leader has something ill to say of the other and he is sick. There is a lot of wirepulling on the communal issue. While Liberals are hopelessly yielding, Messrs Jayakar, Moonjee and Narendranath have valiantly stood out. I don't know how long they can do so. The Conservatives will stand by the Simon Report, while the Liberals will go as far as the Irwin dispatch. In a fortnight there may be some dramatic incidents, some walk-out or withdrawal. Poor Irwin, how these little men he has sent are undoing his great idea. Perhaps another Conference may succeed but this one must fail. The federal waters are unfathomable and communal waters have been made unnavigable. It is such a pity because the opening session created a great impression all round and now the failure will be attributed to our lack of united strength and character and that is what diehard Imperialists wish to depict to the world. It is all very sickening"

F W Wilson cabled on December 16. "I have refrained from cabling for some days hoping against hope that I would be able to send good news of the real progress of the conference but most reluctantly I must admit that the prospects look blackest. The conference today is meeting in an air of unreality for at any moment the full consequences of Hindu-Muslim disagreement may break out with dire results. I can explain the tragedy no better than by saying that a week ago India had practically an entire system of self-government in her grasp and now it has definitely receded. The Premier warned the delegates at Chequers, 'You are imperilling your country's chance', but the appeal fell on deaf ears. 'With a united front, I could go the whole way with you', he said, 'as it

is, I can't advance much beyond the Government of India's report' But nothing moves the communalists though they talk airily and often about nationalism and democracy. The whole situation is most humiliating and depressing, for diehards are now openly gloating and saying 'We told you so These fellows aren't fit to govern themselves' "

What happened at Chequers, the country residence of the British Premier, referred to by F W Wilson, was given in greater detail by the London Correspondent on December 19 "Last Saturday about 30 of the delegates went down to the Prime Minister's country house at Chequers in the hope of being able to compose their differences under the friendly guidance of Mr MacDonald He had no desire to act as an arbitrator between the conflicting communities, nor did he try to bring pressure to bear upon one or the other as has been wrongly stated in the Press He did however put forward some tentative suggestions which he thought might help towards an accommodation but he soon found that a section of the Muslims (inspired by reactionary communications from India) were in no mood to yield an inch of their extreme communal demand. For the provinces generally, the Prime Minister invited the delegates to consider a system of joint electorates for 80 per cent of the council membership with an agreed proportion of those seats reserved for minorities, leaving 20 per cent of the seats to be filled on the basis of separate minority representation In return for the abrogation of separate electorates the Hindus were asked to concede subject to adjustments in discussions, the other safeguards claimed by the Muslims. It is understood that the Hindus were prepared to discuss a settlement on this basis though one or two of them were dubious about their acceptability But the scheme was quite unwelcome to the Muslim members who told the Prime Minister frankly that it would never be agreed to in India by those whom they represented It will be gathered that the Muslims have receded from the more favourable attitude which they were understood to have assumed towards the principle of a common electorate a few weeks ago in consideration of the concessions which it was proposed to make to them elsewhere Egged on by some of their co-religionists in India and by certain interested parties in this country they will apparently not agree to anything which does not give them the maximum representation they are now asking for and the special right of voting separately for their own people"

On the eve of the expected announcement by the British Premier of the Government's policy, The Hindu made an appeal for the release of Congress leaders "to enable them to discuss and express their considered views" on the declaration "We are in a position to state", The Hindu wrote, "on the authority of a distinguished Congress leader, that if Mr MacDonald would have the vision and the strength when announcing this important declaration of policy, to declare that 'in seeking to satisfy the ambitions and aspirations of her wisest sons', he was not going to keep them behind prison bars but was going to give them the fullest freedom to assemble at their next Congress to examine and discuss freely and wisely the proposals of India's future constitution which may be offered to her people and to shape his future proposals in accordance with the verdict of the country thereafter, a peaceful and lasting settlement can be achieved".

On January 19, 1931, the British Premier addressing the concluding session of the R.T.C said it was the Government's policy that responsibility for the

Government of India should be placed upon the legislature, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee and to meet other special circumstances and also with such guarantees as are required by the minorities to protect their political liberties and rights. In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period it will be the primary concern of H M's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new constitution to full responsibility for her own Government."

Referring to an appeal by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru for release of political prisoners he said "It was a wise and moving appeal which I can assure the conference lodges very naturally in my own heart. I should like the conference to open a new chapter in the relations of India and ourselves. If Dr. Sapru's appeal to India as well as to us is responded to in India and a civil quiet is proclaimed and assured, H M's Government will certainly not be backward in responding to his plea which is endorsed by so many of his colleagues here".

The Hindu while declaring that the Premier's announcement "does not meet in full the terms of the National demand" expressed satisfaction that "H M's Government have accepted the principle of full responsible Government for India with transitional safeguards", and thought that so long as the substance of freedom and full self-Government could be guaranteed "there would still be a fair and reasonable basis of negotiation with Congress leaders for an honourable settlement".

Reports of a political amnesty were thick in the air and the New Delhi Correspondent said on January 21 "I am told that the Government has realised it lost the most psychological opportunity of proving its change of heart by not asking the King to announce an amnesty". The reports proved correct and Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were released on January 26 and the Viceroy lifted the ban on the Congress Working Committee. The Hindu hailed the gesture as a "significant and welcome change in the administrative methods of the Government in India". It hoped "Congress leaders will give their most earnest consideration to all the developments that have taken place since the last negotiations broke down and it is our sincere hope that in view of the progress in ideas and proposals that have taken place since August last in England and in India a satisfactory agreement will be reached".

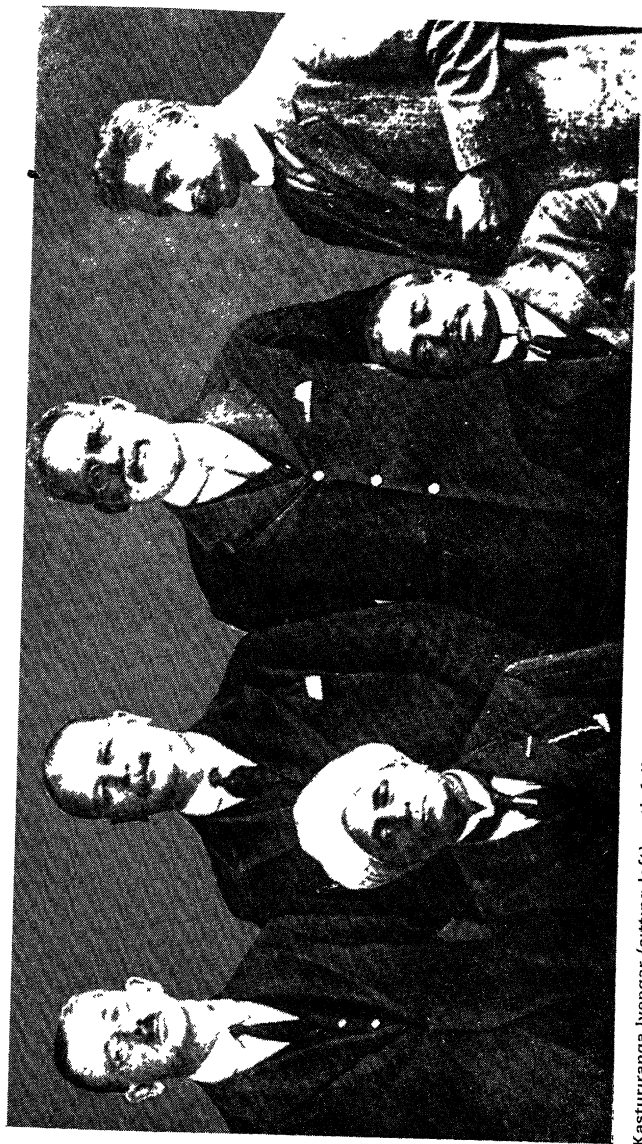
When the stage was being set for Congress-Government negotiations the country suffered a grievous loss in the death of Pandit Motilal Nehru on February 6, 1931. The Hindu quoted his words to a friend a few days before his death. "I am not afraid of death and I have had enough of life but I am determined to live till I have seen the birth of a free India". It added "Death, alas, has won and that is his country's misfortune, indeed there seems to be a fatality dogging her footsteps which has snatched away some of her ablest and most devoted sons in the critical moments of her struggle for freedom". The Hindu said the quality that "one prized in him was the fundamental sanity and breadth of his outlook. He had the truly international mind. It was not the shallow cosmopolitanism of the clever idler who finds in it a refuge from irresponsibility.

Nor was it the pretentious idealism with which blase politicians are wont to while away a holiday stay at Geneva. He was a man to whom knowledge of the workings of the European mind came naturally and the European in his turn

could understand him whereas he was merely puzzled or distracted by the uncompromising vision of a Gandhi or the volcanic emotionalism of a Das. He could play their own game as easily as the best of them and beat them at long odds. And the heat of the fray left no bitterness or grudge in his heart. Few of those Englishmen to whom it fell to cross swords with him in the Assembly would we fancy deny this or that he was undoubtedly the greatest Parliamentarian that India has so far produced."

The Gandhi-Irwin talks whose successful conclusion was to mark a historic milestone in the country's freedom struggle began in New Delhi on February 17, 1931. All Delhi was anxious to get a glimpse of the Mahatma and he received a royal welcome from the Central Secretariat employees as he drove to the Viceroy's House. Describing the scene the New Delhi Correspondent wrote: "A striking phenomenon occurred this afternoon at 2.30 opposite the Imperial Secretariat when Mahatmaji drove to the Viceroy's House for his second interview with Lord Irwin. A little over 3000 persons were standing in front of the north and south blocks of the Secretariat waiting for darshan of Gandhiji. The majority of them were Superintendents, assistants, clerks and chaprasis of the Government of India. They had left their office rooms and were standing from 2 o'clock. Every passing car was eagerly scanned but Gandhiji did not arrive until one minute to 2.30. After several minutes' waiting there was excitement among the crowd of Government servants when the green car containing the solitary figure of Gandhiji was noticed coming up. The car was surrounded at several stages by those gathered there for his darshan and although there were no cries of 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai' every one greeted Mahatmaji with folded hands. Gandhiji for his part had his eyes fixed at the Viceroy's House as it was getting late for him, and acknowledged the greetings in his accustomed manner. Lord Irwin, it might be remembered, speaking at the Aero Club lunch asked if it was not rather remarkable that nowadays when aeroplanes were whirling above New Delhi, no official of the Government of India chose to lift his head from even the most monotonous file. But today an even more remarkable phenomenon was witnessed. When Gandhiji passed through the Kingsway up to the Viceroy's House many European and Indian officers were watching the scene on the road through the windows of the office rooms on both sides of the Secretariat buildings".

Deadlock was reached in the Gandhi-Irwin negotiations when the Congress Working Committee rejected the Viceroy's proposals. It was reported that the main stumbling block to an agreement was the Congress demand for a public enquiry into alleged police excesses on satyagrahis. The grim situation was reflected in the New Delhi Correspondent's dispatch on February 28. "My jail kit-bag is complete except for a toothbrush which I shall buy tomorrow before I leave Delhi". This observation of a prominent member of the Congress Working Committee this afternoon when the Committee discussed the terms offered to Gandhiji last evening, was suggestive of the results of the negotiations. It is clear things are tending towards a definite breakdown. There is no doubt eleventh hour efforts for peace are proceeding thanks to the efforts of Sir T. B. Saprú, Mr. Sastri and Mr. Jayakar, but it is feared that in the face of Lord Irwin's points of offer, there can be no prospect of the Congress Committee revising its opinions". The Correspondent concluded his dispatch by



Kasturranga Iyengar (sitting left) with fellow Editors with whom he visited the war fronts in Europe in 1918 as guests of the Government of India. Others in the picture include Mahbub Alam, G. K. Devadhar, J. A. Sandbrook and H P Ghose.



"Simon go back" A protest demonstration in Madras in 1928 against the Simon Commission which was appointed by the British Government to recommend constitutional reforms. The Commission was boycotted by the entire nation when it came to India

Dandi March. Mahatma Gandhi walking over a foot bridge with his band of volunteers during his historic march to Dandi in March, 1930 to break the salt law





Congress women volunteers picketing a foreign cloth shop in Madras during the satyagraha movement of 1930.

Gandhiji in London Gandhiji with A Rangaswami Iyengar, Editor of The Hindu, and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu on his way to attend the second Round Table Conference in 1931.





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Dandi March: Mahatma Gandhi walking over a foot bridge with his band of volunteers during his historic march to Dandi in March, 1930 to break the salt law



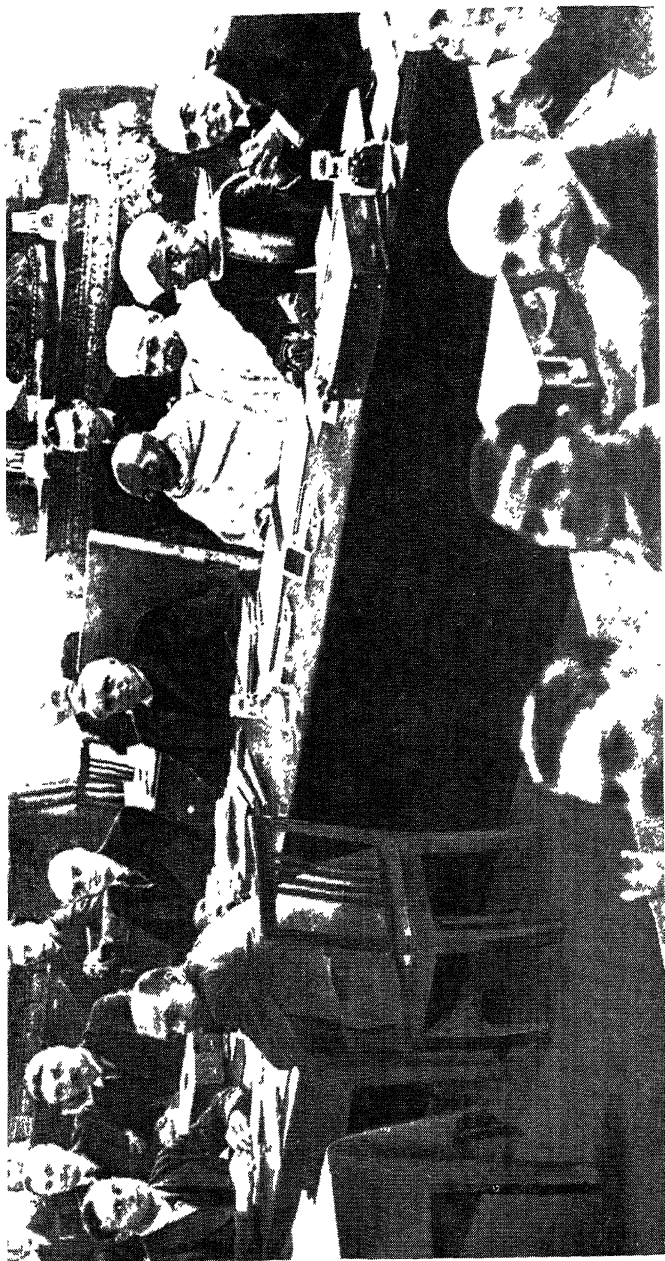




Congress women volunteers picketing a foreign cloth shop in Madras during the satyagraha movement of 1930

Gandhiji in London Gandhiji with A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Editor of The Hindu, and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu on his way to attend the second Round Table Conference in 1931.





The second Round Table Conference in London in 1931 A partial view of the Conference in session  
A Rangaswami Iyengar and Pandit Malaviya could be seen among the delegates. Gandhiji,



Congress President Jawaharlal Nehru attending to party work in Calcutta at the residence of Sarat Chandra Bose in November 1937. Standing behind his chair is Subhas Chandra Bose, President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.



(Below) Gandhiji and M. A. Jinnah seen together in New Delhi before they met the Viceroy on the outbreak of World War II in September, 1939.

Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly from Madras including S Satyamurthi, Sami Venkatachalam Chetti and Mrs. Radhabai Subbaroyan who came out of the Assembly in obedience to a party mandate in 1940





Mussolini inspecting Abyssinian Chieftains in Genoa in November 1938 after the "rape" of Abyssinia.

Adolf Hitler and Neville Chamberlain, British Premier, in conference before the signing of the Munich Pact in 1938.





The Cripps Mission: Sir Stafford Cripps who came to India in March, 1942 on a peace mission, talking to Gandhiji



Cabinet Mission Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President, having talks with the Cabinet Mission in New Delhi in March, 1946 In the picture could be seen Lord Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India (left) and Sir Stafford Cripps (standing)

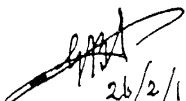
Facsimile of the concluding portion of Bernard Shaw's reply to a questionnaire submitted to him by the London Correspondent of The Hindu in 1947 on India.

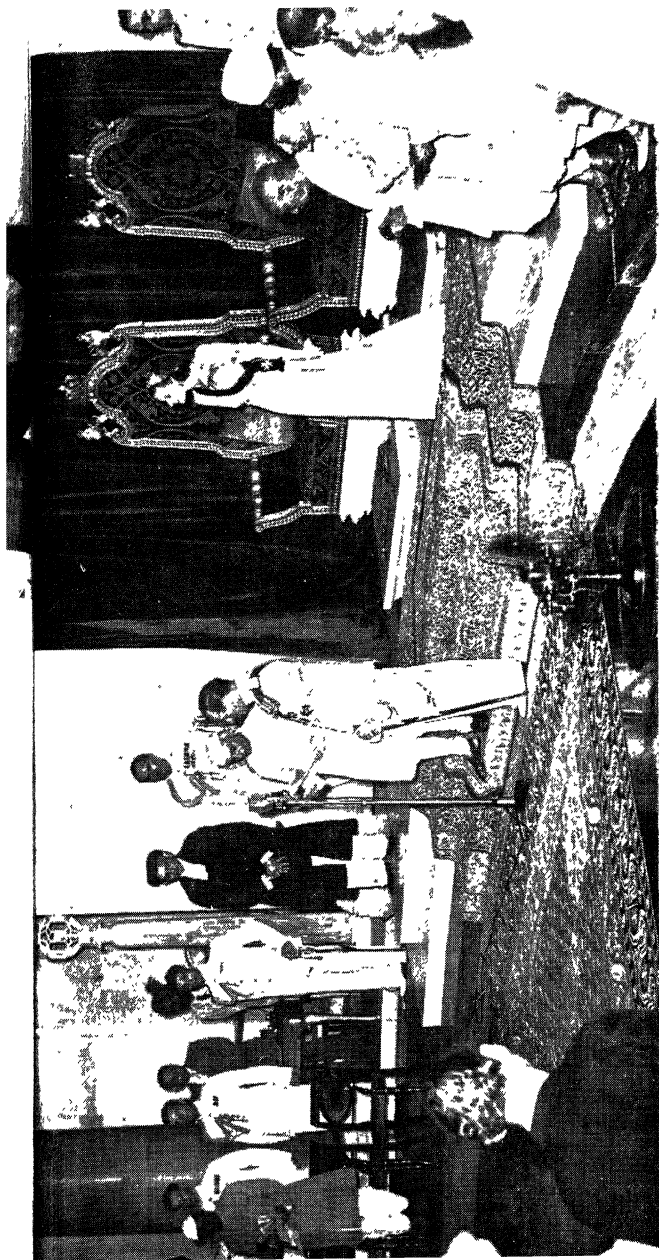
My views are not of the importance  
India.

when will the Indian press stop cadging for bouquets  
from European celebrities?

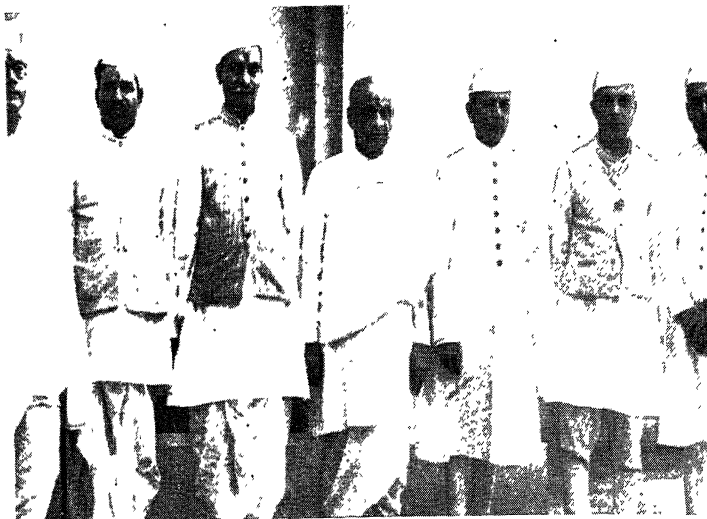
Anglo-Indianism is dead. It has been putrefying to  
my knowledge for 50 years.

What else can Mr. Kerna say than what he has said — wearily?

  
26/2/1947



Freedom' Jawaharlal Nehru being sworn in as the first Prime Minister of free India by the Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten on August 15, 1947.



Interim Government. A group photograph of the members of the interim government which was formed in September 1946. (L to R) Sarat Chandra Bose, Jaggivan Ram, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, Asaf Ali, Jawaharlal Nehru and Syed Ali Zaheer.

Jovial Nehru. A relaxed and fun-loving Prime Minister Nehru throwing a pillow in mock fight at the Subjects Committee meeting of the Avadi Congress in 1955



Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in intimate discussion in Delhi in 1946.







(Left) Chinese aggression Indian prisoners captured by the Chinese during their invasion of India in 1962 seen in prayer, before a candle-lit altar



(Below) Influx of refugees. Following disturbed conditions in East Pakistan in 1971 there was a great exodus of refugees to India and it became a never-ending stream. Picture shows a group of refugees crossing over.

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri (left) and President Ayub Khan of Pakistan greet each other at Tashkent (U.S.S.R.) where they signed a declaration in January, 1966. At extreme right is the Soviet Premier, Mr. Kosygin.



XX

(Right) Lt-Gen. Niazi, the Pakistan Commander, signing the surrender documents in Dacca on December 16, 1971, which brought the war in East Pakistan to an end Lt-Gen J S Aurora, Indian Commander, (left) looks on



(Left) Mrs Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister, conferring with Congress President Kamaraj during an All-India Congress Committee meeting in New Delhi in 1966



(Below) Janata Leaders The big four of the Janata Party which was swept to power in 1977 (L to R) Jagjivan Ram (Defence Minister), Morarji Desai (Prime Minister), Chandra Sekhar (Party President) and Charan Singh (Home Minister).



saying "As matters stand this afternoon, many members of Congress Working Committee are thinking in terms of another period of jail life".

Things however brightened after a midnight talk between Gandhiji and the Viceroy. The New Delhi Correspondent wrote on March 2: "The tone of optimism, which to the agreeable surprise of all was felt last evening, continued today and is expected to gain an impetus, for such indeed I am told was the spirit of the conversations throughout yesterday and till midnight between Gandhiji and Lord Irwin. It appears that Lord Irwin the man has again asserted himself over Lord Irwin the Viceroy and is leaving no stone unturned to see that a way out of the impasse is found and that the ship of peace does not flounder on the rock of departmentalism. The members of his Cabinet also entered into the spirit of the peace mission of Lord Irwin and Mahatma Gandhi. And in the discussion of the draft formula presented on behalf of the Congress Working Committee they were favourably impressed with Gandhiji's burning desire for peace and were not prepared to let responsibility for any breakdown fall on the shoulders of the Viceroy."

"An occasional Correspondent" (who was very active in Delhi in these days) reported. "The situation is very hopeful thanks to eleventh hour efforts of Sir T. B. Sapru, Mr. Jayakar and Mr. Sastri. 'There is agreement on all points and by tomorrow night a statement will be issued announcing the final conclusion', remarked one who is in the know of things"

And so it proved. The Gandhi-Irwin agreement was announced on the morning of March 4, 1931 by The Hindu through a one page-supplement.

In a report before the signing of the agreement the New Delhi Correspondent referred to the concession which Gandhiji had obtained in regard to the salt law (the right to make salt for one's own use) and said: "Gandhiji's heart was more on the salt issue than on any other. He felt that breach of the salt law was a moral protest and that no settlement could be honourable to his side which did not acknowledge the right to the people to use nature's gift. He always used to tell his colleagues that on this issue he would have little trouble to convince the Viceroy and so it happened. In the most businesslike manner he and Sir George Schuster (Finance Member) drew up an agreement and handed it over to the Viceroy by 1 p.m. In the afternoon the two sides began to hammer out a settlement". The Correspondent added: "What struck Congress workers most in today's story was that Miss Slade (Mira Ben) dressed in Khaddar as a typical village girl surprised the Viceroy's House by her appearance with the Mahatma's food in a basket. I hear that she was allowed to go into the Viceroy's room where conversations were going on so that the Viceroy had a glimpse of this most devoted votary of the Mahatma".

The Hindu made big play with the Gandhi-Irwin pact. It carried two two-column pictures of Gandhiji and Irwin and published the text of the agreement. Under the pact the Congress agreed to call off the civil disobedience movement, stop boycott of British goods, and take part in the second R.T.C. The Viceroy agreed to withdraw ordinances issued in connection with the C.D. campaign, declare an amnesty for political prisoners, and return property confiscated during the movement. The right to manufacture salt for personal use and to picket liquor shops was granted.

Commenting on the pact the Hindu said: "No two persons could better represent India and Great Britain at this juncture. That a settlement has been

made possible by the fact that these two men in true religious spirit strove with a determination to achieve peace and goodwill between two great peoples where bitterness and mutual distrust had been brought about by policies and incidents of the past, is no less significant". The Hindu added "We are sure, now that all obstacles have been surmounted, the two parties will be able to proceed to the great constructive effort to establish India's future constitution in accordance with the nation's desires and needs in the spirit of conciliation that has today been inaugurated. It will be the country's prayer that God would give Mahatma Gandhi health and strength to lead the national cause and realise the nation's purposes with the same vision, wisdom and unstinted co-operation of all leaders, parties and communities that he has received at this juncture. It will also be the country's devout hope that after Lord Irwin lays down the Viceroyalty that has culminated in this great and historic step in national participation, he will be able with even more freedom and energy to assist in the completion of the national constitution of the Indian people whom he has loved and befriended".

Everything however was not smooth sailing and it seemed there would be many a slip between the cup and the lip before Gandhiji, who had been chosen as the sole representative of the Congress, could leave for London to attend the Second Round Table Conference. Indeed at one stage, (August 13, 1931) the Congress Working Committee decided not to take part in the R.T.C. as a protest against the repeated breaches of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and lack of response from the Government to representations made in this regard. Gandhiji decided to make the trip after a three-hour interview with the Viceroy on September 26. The Hindu hailed the news with great satisfaction and said: "A great step forward has been taken towards the goal of a friendly and permanent settlement between England and India. The great need of the hour is not a narrowly realistic approach towards the Indian demand for self-Government but a bold imagination and a firm resolve to fulfil Britain's pledges in a generous spirit. Now, if ever, is the time propitious for attempting that lasting conciliation and peace with honour which all thoughtful minds on both sides have always wished and prayed for. It would be criminal folly if so splendid an opportunity were thrown away. India has stated her demand in unambiguous terms and the justice and reasonableness of that demand has been conceded by H.M.'s late Government. If its successor should endorse that attitude and approach the problem imbued with a truly friendly spirit they will find in Gandhiji not a huckstering and bargaining opponent but a hearty and reasonable collaborator in the task of erecting a constitution of free India".

As Gandhiji prepared to sail for London, his hostess in the British capital, Miss Muriel Lester, sent a message to The Hindu from Kingsley Hall, East End of London. She said: "Since it has become known that Kingsley Hall is to have the great honour of entertaining Mr. Gandhi during his visit to London, I have received congratulations from all over the country. Piles of letters have come from friends and strangers offering me help of all sorts. Fruit, milk and other food has been promised by rich and poor alike. Even people in Lancashire who have been nearly ruined by Mr. Gandhi's policy of boycott have written saying how much they admire him and his effort to raise the status and standard of living of his people and that they long to meet him and tell him so.

We are glad that the great representative of an eastern nation has chosen to come to the East End of London to stay among the poor, the overcrowded and the distressed. Kingsley Hall is dedicated to God and we who live here are only the servants of the people. There are eleven of us spending our time in menial work, in prayer and in service of the neighbourhood. We practised Satyagraha throughout the Great War. When later on we heard of Gandhi and his principles, we recognised in him one who was living out the teachings of Jesus Christ and ever since we have thought of him as our comrade. Whatever Governments may say or do I know that the people of England or at any rate the poor who form the great majority, sympathise with the nationalist aspirations and ideals of the Indian people. We look forward to welcoming their great leader."

As Gandhiji arrived in London on September 12, 1931, the London Correspondent cabled that "no untoward circumstances except bad weather attended Gandhiji's arrival. Crowds thronged the streets both in Folkestone (where he landed from his ship) and in London. There were rumours of an intended rag by students but a strong police force guarded the approaches to the Friends House, Euston, where an overflowing reception was held attended by a thousand people. All admissions were strictly scrutinised. The enthusiastic audience represented the churches, political parties, missionary societies, arts, literature, trades unions, the women's movement, temperance organisations and many other branches of public life. Mr Gandhi, who received a great ovation, spoke sitting. He said that although he would not claim to represent those who resented such a claim, he did represent the dumb starving millions of India."

In another dispatch the Correspondent wrote: "This has been Gandhiji's week. Even the stress of economic crisis, the threat of a general election and talk of a mutiny in the navy have not diverted public attention from the great little man who landed on our shores last night. The common question everywhere has been: "have you seen Gandhi?" And those who have not seen him make up for the omission by reading every bit of news they can about him — and there was plenty of it to meet the demand, from mere idle gossip to substantial information about the man himself and the cause he represents. The personal element looms large in all such cases. Not India and India's demands so much as the strange Indian who has descended upon us is what attracts the attention of most people. The crowds which greeted him at Marseilles and again at Folkestone and London doubtless included many who want India to have a fair deal in this business and would be only too glad, if her demands could be satisfied. Others were no doubt conscious of a certain touch of human affinity with this simple sincere soul who speaks for so large a section of our fellowmen and women, but frankness compels me to add that a large proportion of those who stood in the rain awaiting his arrival were moved mainly by idle curiosity which had been well whetted by the sensation mongering Press".

When Gandhiji and the other Indian delegates, which included A. Ranga-swami Iyengar, arrived in London they had to deal with a new Government, for the Labour Ministry had fallen and with it the Secretary of State, Wedgwood Benn. A new National Government had been formed with Ramsay MacDonald as Premier and the new Secretary of State for India was Sir Samuel Hoare.

The Hindu was sorry that Labour had fallen. "The late Government's Indian policy has been often and severely criticised in these columns, but it is just to admit that of all British parties it has shown the greatest understanding of the psychological difficulties that are at the root of the problem as well as the most genuine desire to co-operate in the achievement of India's aspirations. The question is whether the new Government will bind themselves to a scrupulous and speedy fulfilment of the late Government's policy outlined in Mr Macdonald's concluding speech at the R T C".

In a tribute to Wedgwood Benn, The Hindu said: "There will be universal regret in this country that Mr Benn's signal services to its cause should have been so abruptly cut short. By his disinterested devotion to the cause of Indian self-Government and his keen understanding of and imaginative sympathy with the promptings of national self-respect he has achieved a unique place in the esteem of our countrymen such as has been given to no English statesman of recent times with the exception of Edwin Montagu".

In a special interview to The Hindu cabled by the London Correspondent on October 2, 1931, Wedgwood Benn said: "I gladly send a message to The Hindu whose wise guidance and true patriotism have often been of great value in Indian affairs. The late Government earnestly desirous of fulfilling the pledges made to India and renewed in the Viceroy's declaration of October, 1929, pursued unremittingly the policy of understanding and conference by which alone differences can be surmounted. It is my earnest hope that by continuance of this policy success may be achieved and the peoples of India and Britain be united in the Commonwealth by bonds of sympathy and understanding".

The Hindu at the same time published F. W. Wilson's assessment of the retiring and the new Secretary of State. On Wedgwood Benn, Wilson said: "He was hopelessly weak and incapable of making up his mind". On Sir Samuel Hoare: "Sir Samuel Hoare does not possess the same fundamental sympathy with India as his predecessor. He is overwhelmingly polite, full of platitudinous urbanities, scrupulously correct but carefully official. I do not think he has got any great enthusiasm for India, any real feeling or understanding of the Indian problem. He believes in Federation in a vague and not very determined fashion but it is federation with emphasis on the minus quantities and not upon the positive factors which induced so many Indians to support the scheme. He attaches far too much importance to the minority question. He will not actively oppose any real measure of agreement but he will sniff in a supercilious manner at differences and antagonisms. I am afraid the reactionary Muslims will find him rather sympathetic and the conservative princes will receive, too, a sympathetic hearing or at least a better hearing than they deserve". Events proved Wilson to be a correct judge of Sir Samuel Hoare.

When Gandhiji sailed for London he did so with a heavy heart for many things which had happened in the country had grieved him. One of them was the execution of Bhagat Singh and two of his comrades in Lahore in March, 1931. Gandhiji said "The execution of such a youth and his comrades has given them the crown of martyrdom. Thousands feel today bereaved by his death. For the Government I cannot help feeling that they have lost a golden opportunity of winning over the Revolutionary Party. It was their clear duty in view of the settlement, at least to suspend indefinitely their execution. By their

action they have put a severe strain upon the settlement and once more proved their capacity for flouting public opinion and for exhibition of the immense brute power they possess"

The Hindu criticised the procedure of the trial itself which resulted in the execution of Bhagat Singh and the others. It held the whole trial was vitiated because of the absence of the accused in the court and the retraction of evidence by two of the seven approvers. "To carry out a sentence of death", The Hindu said, "passed as a result of trial in such extraordinary circumstances will have been in any case to incur a very grave responsibility. But in this case the additional point had been raised that legally there was no authority competent to give effect to the sentence. . . By the indecent haste with which they have proceeded in the matter they have defied public opinion and exasperated it in a manner that it is difficult to envisage the gravity of the reaction in this country to this, their latest blunder"

The Lahore Correspondent reported on March 25, 1931 that scenes reminiscent of the Rowlatt Act agitation were witnessed in Lahore which observed a hartal. As the huge procession carrying the remains of the three martyrs wended its way through the streets of Lahore, their parents and relatives were mounted on a stool in the middle of the procession and the crowd shouted "Bhagat Singh Zindabad". Women of whom there were five thousand made a rush towards the biers to touch them and many fainted. A European lady dressed in Indian sari, who was accompanying the procession, fell at the feet of Bhagat Singh's mother and kissed them.

The Cawnpore Hindu-Muslim riots which disfigured that city during this period produced a non-violent Congressman of unexampled courage and sacrifice who gave his life in the cause of his mission to save innocent victims from the communal inferno. The Allahabad Correspondent told the story of Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi "who unarmed and unprotected rushed to the thick of the riot areas and rescued victims of both communities but it was the Muslim rioters who killed him in spite of the fact that a Muslim volunteer who was with him told the mob that he was a noble soul who had rescued and tended the wounds of 150 Muslim riot victims. Vidyarthi bared his chest to them and he was killed and his body thrown into a burning house"

The Hindu in a tribute to him said it was a "heroic finale to a life of incessant service and unostentatious sacrifice. There is something epical in the fearless, nay, reckless disregard of his own safety which impelled him on his errand of peace and mercy".

The Hindu was not entirely happy when the Congress at its Karachi session in April, 1931, passed a resolution on fundamental rights which should be enshrined in the constitution of free India and another on social and economic policy. The Hindu said, "These planks in the Congress programme are admittedly provisional and have been drafted mainly with a view to formulating in concrete and popular language the general ideals for which the Congress stands. All that the resolution posits is that any constitution to the framing of which the Congress is a consenting party shall provide or enable the Swaraj Government to provide the conditions and amenities it mentions. Their precise nature and form must thus obviously rest in the last instance with the Swaraj Government when it begins to function and a Government of that complexion can only carry out and put into force measures agreeable to the

people as a whole. In the circumstances it seems unnecessary even for those who honestly feel that this resolution treads in some ways on dangerous ground to take a too tragic view of the situation. The Congress executive for its part must realise that there are striking differences of opinion within the Congress itself on the merits of particular items in the programme. In view of this and the imperative necessity of pushing on with the work in hand they would be well advised not to distract and divide energies on questions which however important can become live issues only when Swaraj is a reality."



**I**N HIS FIRST speech at the Round Table Conference on September 15, 1931, Gandhiji created a profound impression, the London Correspondent of The Hindu said "Without flinching he put the full Congress case but it was expressed in a way that none could resent. In the Delhi settlement the Congress had accepted the principle of Federation. Neither the Congress nor he (said Gandhiji) could be satisfied with a political constitution which in reality gave India nothing. "Time was", Gandhiji said, "when I prided myself on being called a British subject. But I have ceased for many years to call myself a British subject. I aspired and still aspire to be a citizen not in the empire but in the Commonwealth—in the partnership—possibly in an indissoluble partnership but not a partnership superimposed by one nation on another. . If I want that freedom I should not be deserving of it if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak or strong, to the same freedom".

As the conference dragged on without any apparent results, the London Correspondent cabled on September 20: "The impatience of the Indian delegates to the R.T.C. at the slow progress of the Federal Committee has deepened during the week-end as it now seems clear that certain sections are determined to delay decisions until after the Minorities' Committee meets. Gandhiji and his colleagues feel that the conference is being allowed to drift. They contemplate joint action with a view to the acceleration of the business and taking steps to secure the co-operation of the Liberal delegates to urge the Government to make an early declaration of policy confirming and developing Mr. MacDonald's speech of January 19 especially on the fundamental issues raised by Gandhiji last Thursday. They fear the domestic crisis may precipitate a general election creating a situation prejudicial to India's claims. The feeling grows that continued "second reading" speeches on the subsidiary matters are only a vain repetition".

That Gandhiji was getting restive was evident from what he said at a meeting "The time is fast coming", he said, "when the Government must declare its policy one way or the other. The delegates are not going idly to wait for something to turn up. I have definite instructions and as soon as I find I cannot usefully remain here my back will be turned upon these shores"

In another speech Gandhiji said: "The horizon is dark but we are ready to struggle anew. The Ganges of our blood will flow if necessary but we shall not injure any individual we are fighting against"

On November 24, the London Correspondent reported "Signs multiply that Conservative reactionaries in both houses are making a dead set against any concessions to India's essential demand at the R.T.C. Concurrently with the intensive bombardment from the Rothermere Press they are besetting Mr. Ramsay MacDonald all round with threats of what will happen if he does not yield to the present parliamentary pressure. The Daily Herald declares that the Government have decided to postpone indefinitely any measure of responsibility at the centre. The intention is said to be to introduce in the next session a bill granting Provincial autonomy but relegating eventual central responsibility to the preamble. Opinion in Government circles is that in view of the non-solution of the minorities problem and the formidable parliamentary opposition, any other course is impossible"

Reuter reported that in a joint statement leading non-Muslim delegates headed by Sapru and Sastri said "It is our considered opinion that no political party of any standing in India will in the slightest degree favour the introduction of provincial autonomy as a first instalment with a mere promise of establishing responsibility on a federal basis in the future. The conference was not called for this purpose. None of us would have taken the trouble to come to England to achieve merely Provincial autonomy which indeed was recommended by the Simon Commission's report. We think, in the first place, no genuine Provincial autonomy can be established without responsibility at the centre"

The Hindu warned Great Britain it would have no excuse "for ignoring this warning which is as cogent as it is weightily supported . . . A constitution which the bulk of the people for whose benefit it is devised are resolved in advance not to work is dead before it is born as the experience of India under the Montford Reforms has amply shown. The Government may no doubt cherish the hope that they can work the scheme with the co-operation of those elements among the Indian minorities who have unfortunately shown themselves only too amenable to the interested leadership of the British diehards. But the hope will soon prove to be nothing but delusion. If in its resolve to work its will on India the Government should be so foolish as to invoke the aid of communal jealousies there is little reason to think that it will meet with greater success in gaining its objective but it would be taking upon itself the odious responsibility for importing into the political atmosphere in this country an amount of bitterness and mutual suspicion which would exaggerate a hundred-fold the difficulties of the present situation. Besides as the delegates' manifesto pertinently points out the very grant of Provincial autonomy unaccompanied by the cementing force of self-government at the centre would act as a spur to the centrifugal tendencies assiduously cultivated by shortsighted sectional interests".

The second R.T.C. ended on December 1, 1931 with a policy statement by the Premier, Ramsay MacDonald who said: "The great idea of an All-India Federation still holds the field. The principles of a responsible Federal Government subject to certain reservations and safeguards through the transitional period remains unchanged. And we are all agreed that the Governor's provinces

of the future are to be responsibly governed units enjoying the greatest possible measure of freedom from outside interference and dictation in carrying out their own policies in their own sphere"

Proposing a vote of thanks Gandhiji said: "I would like to study your (Prime Minister's) declaration once, twice, thrice and as often as may be necessary, scanning every word thereof and reading the hidden meaning in it, crossing all the T's and dotting all the I's and if then come to the conclusion — as just now seems likely — that as far as I am concerned we have come to the parting of the ways and that our ways take different directions, it does not matter to us. Even so you are entitled to my hearty and sincerest vote of thanks".

In his reply Ramsay MacDonald said "I am so glad my old friend Sir Abdul Qayum seconded the resolution. It was a great achievement to get Mr Gandhi and him together. That is a foretaste of what is going to happen when the Muslims and the Hindus (Gandhiji interjected: "Not Hindus"). Mr Gandhi understands the lapses of the untrained human tongue

Gandhiji: I forgive it.

The Prime Minister: He understands the lapses of the human tongue such as mine, Mussalmans and others (laughter and applause) together. I am beginning to pick up Mr. Gandhi's thoughts because he has always told us that you were sections and he comprehended you all

Gandhiji: Of course

The Prime Minister. But look at the effect of you two coming together in order to co-operate and express gratitude to a Scotsman. My dear Mahatma, let us go on in this way. You may find it the only way"

Reuter reported a dramatic scene as the Prime Minister after the conclusion of the conference shook hands with Gandhiji. At the conclusion of his speech, Ramsay MacDonald raised the Chairman's mallet in tense silence and with a resounding hit upon the table said: "For the last time I declare that the conference now adjourns". The silence continued for a few seconds and then the Prime Minister moved towards Mr. Gandhi and clasped him by the hand. The two looked straight into each other's eyes and talked in very low tones — of the future? Then Mr. MacDonald wished farewell to one delegate after another.

The Hindu Special Correspondent cabled that Indian Liberals considered Mr. MacDonald's statement as "very satisfactory". "The Liberals recognise that a definite statement has now been made of Federation and Central Responsibility with safeguards and that the declaration commits to Mr. MacDonald's policy the bulk of the Conservative Party which till now demanded a "completion of the picture" of the future constitution before defining its attitude, meanwhile giving Provincial autonomy a trial. Gandhiji, the Correspondent said, desired time to express his opinion but he confessed he was much worried by the ugly situation in Bengal. He considered the sanctioning of repressive policy was wholly inconsistent with the desire expressed here to part with power and give India freedom".

The Hindu said the National Government's endorsement of Labour's policy "marks a definite advance in the attitude of the British political parties towards the question of Indian self-government". But it felt the conference had been at the same time "less productive of positive results in the shape of a

constitutional framework that had been expected. Failure to achieve a communal solution has been partly responsible for this."

The Hindu noted that as the participation of the princely states was indispensable for the creation of a self-governing federation, whether such a federation comes into being forthwith or not would thus depend on the princes "and we have every hope that the princes to whose far-sighted statesmanship we owe the conception of Federation as practical politics will not be found wanting now that the time has come to implement their belief in Federation.. while British India adheres to the view that its case for self-government does not depend on whether a federation materialises or not, it agrees that the most satisfactory shape the constitution can take is that of a federation. And it will wholeheartedly work for that end, reserving its right to press for self-government for British India alone should the Federation unfortunately fail to materialise for any reason though the Prime Minister's statement is silent as to what the attitude of H.M.'s Government is in such a contingency".

As Gandhiji was on his way back home from London he was interviewed by an agency which gave the story exclusively to The Hindu in India. Gandhiji was asked, Do you agree with me, Mr. Gandhi, that you are the safety-catch on the great machine of India, that you are the restraining influence on the wild youth of the country, that it would be criminal folly to deport you from India for once you are gone there will be revolt and rebellion?

Gandhiji replied I agree with you. Such a thing would be the act of a blind man who wilfully shuts his eyes to the state of affairs in India, who fails to realise the extent to which the unrest, this demand for Swaraj, has gripped the whole country. If I were to be deported from India many evil things might happen, but I feel even in my absence my influence for peace will last, though I may be far away my spirit will remain behind. The struggle would go on. It would become more acute, yet I trust it would not become violent. I should be sorry to think my restraining influence should disappear after I had vanished. No, I should not resist deportation. No true satyagrahi should resist suffering laid on him. He must welcome any punishment that is meted out to him".

In reply to another question, Gandhiji said: "My dream of a free India? Ah! it will take years to materialise. I see India free, self-governing and self-supporting with peace abroad and trade and communications well-established, with great cities in which busy men and women dwell contented as bees in humming hives and with a chain of linked villages happy in their home industries. Women shall play their part equally with men in this new, free India".

And Gandhiji ended with this verse:

"Then to the clear, Blue Heavens her banner wide unfurled

Let the new India face the future and the world"

An Englishwoman, Miss Gwyneth Foden, in an article in The Hindu described her impressions of the R.T.C. She wrote, "No emotional scenes took place this time at the end of the second R.T.C. on December 1. No strains of music were heard accompanying hurrahs from the delegates when they were told by the Prime Minister, Mr Ramsay MacDonald, that his Government were prepared to go far to meet the aspirations of the people of India. This time the atmosphere was changed. A potent silence filled the Queen Anne room on the Prime Minister's concluding words. I shall never forget the description of the

ghastly echo when the Prime Minister tapped his Chairman's mallet declaring the conference over. Did the mallet sound the death knell to all goodwill and friendship between the two nations? India must realise she can only rely on herself, that only she can help herself. Disillusion and desperation now take the place of goodwill. England has failed in every way and the consequences of her failure remain to be felt to the full."

Miss Foden hit the headlines in London in February, 1932. An airmail story by Reuter published in *The Hindu* on February 15 called her "the most beautiful daughter of an Indian Army General". Reuter said Miss Foden was a follower of an Indian Sadhu, Sri Purohit Swami, who had come to London after many years of solitary meditation in the Himalayas, "to flood your people with sunshine". Miss Foden told an English newspaper how she became the Sadhu's follower. She said while she was standing on the banks of a river near Delhi she met the "naked dust-covered Indian Sadhu". Together they sat by the road-side talking of life and religion. The Sadhu revealed that he was a graduate of the Oxford University and declared he and Miss Foden would meet again on the river banks years hence. Miss Foden added: "That talk revolutionised my life."

Tendentious reports of the situation in Bengal and the United Provinces in the British Press prepared the people for more drastic measures in India. The London Correspondent in a dispatch on December 24, 1931 said that no discrimination was made between terrorists and Congressmen and they were clubbed together in the attack on nationalists. "The special Correspondent of *The Times*", the Correspondent wrote, "sends copious extracts from communist pamphlets circulating in Bengal. He insinuates that the Congress is in some degree responsible for the dissemination of this propaganda because 'Congress funds are freely forthcoming for the defence of prisoners in conspiracy trials'. Real concern is felt here at the prospect of intensified struggle and earnest hope expressed that both Government and the Congress in the interests of a peaceful settlement of the constitutional issue will avoid more provocative measures."

The worst fears of the Correspondent were realised when Jawaharlal Nehru and his companion, T. A. K. Sherwani were arrested on board a train in Allahabad on December 26, 1931. They had planned to go to Bombay to attend a meeting of the Congress Working Committee and to meet Gandhiji on his return from London. The Allahabad Correspondent who reported the arrest said: "History repeated itself and touching scenes were enacted in the first setting of the melodrama staged by the Government today when the prison doors of Naini swung open to receive Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. T. A. K. Sherwani. Your Correspondent was one of the first to accost the Pandit who accompanied by Mr. Measures, Police Superintendent, stopped for a moment before the prison gates and wished those assembled good bye. "My journey has proved much too short and I have returned earlier than one expected", he told them. After his personal luggage and dispatch boxes which were detrained from the Howrah Mail and which had been brought along with him were conveyed inside the prison, Panditji entered the jail with Col. Oberai, Prison Superintendent, who received him. "We will meet again, won't we?" Pandit Nehru said to me cheerfully as he waved his hand and the gate of the famous jail closed upon the retreating figure of Nehru."

In connection with the "No rent" campaign which was in full swing in the Zamindari areas of U.P. the Government had promulgated an ordinance and Jawaharlal and Sherwanī had been served orders under it prohibiting them from leaving Allahabad without official permission. This ban they had defied. The Hindu characterised the Government's action an "extraordinarily" foolish attempt to bolster up bureaucratic prestige.

As Gandhiji landed in Bombay on December 28, The Hindu in an "affectionate homage" said he had been to the Indian people "the grand symbol of national self-respect. He has given their intense yearnings and aspirations a larger and more splendid utterance". But, The Hindu said, the situation that faced the Mahatma in India 'today is not such as to augment that cheerfulness. Rule by ordinance has been revived in its most intense form and three provinces have already felt the weight of the bureaucratic fist'.

The new year (1932) began with the Congress Working Committee deciding to resume the Civil Disobedience campaign in view of the Government's repressive policy and the unsympathetic reply of the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, to Gandhiji's telegram seeking an interview. The Committee also rejected the Prime Minister's declaration of policy as it was "wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in terms of the Congress demand".

The Hindu characterised the Viceroy's reply to Gandhiji as "bidding fair to precipitate a crisis of unparalleled seriousness and magnitude. While Gandhiji as the sole representative of the Congress has been straining every nerve to find points of agreement to serve as a basis for further co-operation and H. M.'s Government has reiterated its faith in the conference method and chalked out steps by which that method was to be implemented in India, things have been said and done in this country which have had inevitably the effect of rendering co-operation infinitely more difficult".

"We cannot help feeling", said The Hindu, "that the Viceroy has been extraordinarily ill-advised in the attitude he has adopted in his reply to Gandhiji, an attitude so provocative that it has induced a similar stiffness on the part of the Congress Working Committee and precipitated unfortunate developments. If matters are allowed to drift it is not difficult to see that the country will once again be overwhelmed by untold loss and suffering. No light excuse will avail anybody who precipitated such a crisis unnecessarily. It is not even now too late for the Government to retrieve their blunder and secure the co-operation of that great organisation which not only represents the vast bulk of Indian public opinion but is also the declared enemy of violence".

But the sage advice of The Hindu fell on deaf ears and events moved on to their tragic end. Gandhiji was arrested on January 4 under Bombay Regulation 25 of 1927 in Bombay and taken to Yerawada Jail. The Congress President, Sardar Patel, was also arrested. Salivateswarān in Bombay gave a graphic description of the arrest of the Mahatma in the early hours of the morning. As Gandhiji got ready to leave with the police Salivati whispered to Mira Ben who was with Gandhiji, to request Gandhiji to give a message to the people. On the request being conveyed to him Gandhiji wrote on a slip of paper and passed it on to Sardar Patel. "Dear Vallabhbhai", the message said, "infinite is God's Mercy. Please tell the people never to swerve from truth and non-violence, never to flinch to give their life and all to win Swaraj".

Then followed heart breaking scenes of leave-taking Mrs Gandhi, Gandhiji's hostess and other ladies burst into tears Gandhiji patted them on the back. Then came Mira Ben She knelt down, embracing Gandhiji's hands. She kissed Gandhiji's palm and tore herself away from the scene.

The Hindu said in arresting Gandhiji, the Government had "flown in the face of every responsible section of public opinion in the country — European, Liberals, businessmen, both Indian and English, all in fact for whose moderation and good sense they used to profess respect when it was the fashion to contrast the Congress 'extremism' with their sobriety To flout the wishes of a whole nation in this highhanded fashion and at the same time call for co-operation in the task of constitution building is a contradiction of which the bureaucracy is perfectly capable By its supremely unwise and utterly indefensible display of the "firm hand" the Government of India has today put itself hopelessly in the wrong".

Hell was let loose as the Governments in the centre and the provinces went all out to break the morale of the Satyagrahis who resumed picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops and organised processions and meetings. Thousands were arrested, Congress offices raided and property seized and Congress volunteers were beaten and tortured with a fiendishness unheard of before. In Madras one of the methods adopted by the police against women picketers was to train a water hose on them and hit them with water. The Hindu reported on January 25, 1932 that two women volunteers who were subjected to this treatment fell down unconscious and the police prevented any one rushing to their help After the women regained consciousness they were picked up, taken a short distance and released

The practice of using water-vans to disperse volunteers was given up on a protest by the Madras Corporation The Police Commissioner in a letter to the Corporation said "As the Corporation has taken up this attitude I am prepared to discontinue the use of the van for this purpose But I think it much to be regretted that such a humanitarian way of dispersing unlawful assemblies and keeping order in the city should be discontinued, more especially as the van is only used for a few minutes daily for this purpose and the cost of petrol and water is not defrayed by the Corporation"

The Allahabad Correspondent reported on February 4: "It is reported that as it is not possible to lock in political prisoners in the tents erected for them in the Allahabad District Jail, 'C' class prisoners are chained together at night in groups in the tents while sleeping. A cup is placed in front of each prisoner for easing himself. Lt. Col. R. S. Townsend, Superintendent of the jail, told the Correspondent that the manner in which the prisoners were confined at night in tents was permissible under the jail manual".

The same Correspondent sent a statement by Mr. Duncan Greenlees, a Theosophist and Headmaster of the C. A. V. High School, Allahabad, who was prosecuted under the Press Emergency Act with having published a pamphlet inciting violence. Mr. Greenlees said in his statement that he received with "horror and disgust" the Collector's letter on February 3, 1932, "asking me to prostitute this sacred trust by spying for the police upon my boys and report any whom I noticed attending Congress meetings. Where any of my boys are likely to be in physical danger there it is my proud duty to go to watch and try to guard them but I naturally refused to obey so wrongful an order as this.

I am ashamed to say that all other headmasters obeyed it without a word of protest". Mr. Greenlees, who was a Scotsman, said the whole atmosphere of recognised schools had now become foul beyond belief. Even ordinary patriotic songs were forbidden, secret orders were sent to headmasters to refuse admission to any teacher or student who had played his part in helping his country while in England such would have the right to figure in the roll of honour in the school Assembly Hall."

As reports continued to pour in of police excesses against Congress civil resisters in Madras Presidency, including the case of an European magistrate in Tellicherry (Malabar) who ordered the confiscation of the *tali* (sacred marriage symbol) of a Hindu Congresswoman to realise a fine imposed on her (the magistrate, according to the Government, later expressed regret for his action although it seemed the law did not prohibit the attachment of the *tali* and the Government said they intended to amend the rule in this respect), the Home Member of Madras, Sir Mahomed Usman was plied with a volley of questions in the Legislative Council on police action. To all of them his standard reply was that the Government had no information or to ask for notice. The Hindu criticised the "fencing tactics of the Home Member who has now by practice perfected for himself a kind of type design in these matters". "In giving the stereotyped reply that the Government have 'no information' and in not having taken steps in cases in which the Government had ample time to do so, to obtain or furnish the information demanded by honourable members in respect of definite complaints of police excesses... the Home Member of the Madras Government took up what we consider to be a wrong attitude. It is not only opposed to the fundamental principles of the constitution but is calculated directly to restrict and reduce the status and function of the legislature in its relations to the executive even under the present Government of India Act. A proper conception of the responsibility which a member of the Government owes to the legislature and to the public should constrain him to go much further than the Home Member was prepared to do yesterday when he said he would call for information in cases in which he had replied: "Government have no information" and try as far as possible to furnish it to the house".

There was an improvement in the Home Member's replies when a few days later he admitted in reply to a question that the beating of Khasa Subba Rau and O. P. Ramaswami, Congress volunteers, while they were picketing in Madras was "severe". The Hindu noting that this was the first time the Home Member had admitted "brutal beating" by the police asked for a definite clarification from the Government if the law permitted the use of force against individual civil resisters.

Sir Mahomed Usman was not alone in the attitude of high-handedness he adopted towards Satyagrahis and answering questions about them. His colleague the Law Member, Mr (later Sir) M. Krishna Nair tried to outbeat him. He refused to agree to supply buttermilk to 'C' class political prisoners in spite of pleas from non-official members of the Legislative Council. His constant refrain to all questions on the subject was: These prisoners in the 'C' class are not accustomed to buttermilk.

One member asked. What is the reason for Government being so much opposed to this?

Mr. Krishna Nair: Because they do not want.



The Hindu thought the Government's decision was "unfortunate and erroneous not merely in respect of political prisoners but also of ordinary prisoners whose habitual diet can easily be shown to include or exclude buttermilk as the case may be. There are many classes and communities in the districts to whom buttermilk is a sheer necessity and there are others who do not so regard it. It is not right for the Government to generalise in this sweeping manner and cut off buttermilk from the ration of those who are accustomed to it and who would, we believe, be quite willing even to forego some portion of the non-buttermilk diet for the purpose if Government must needs retrench it in their case".

The severe repression in India was soothing to the soul of the diehards in England. The London Correspondent wrote: "Great jubilation has prevailed in the camp of the diehards at the decision of the Government to declare open war on the National Congress. All the journals of that persuasion have been throwing up their hats with ever increasing glee as news of fresh arrests have come in from India. The comments of papers like the *Morning Post*, and *Daily Telegraph* are proof enough that the measures taken by Government are a definite reversal of Lord Irwin's policy. They have got what they have been clamouring for and as is usual with their tribe in such circumstances they at once begin to ask for more. There are no limits to the repression which these martinets would apply to India. Some of them write as if it would be quite a simple matter to rule 300 millions of people by martial law. They little realise the depths which have been stirred by the Government's precipitate action".

As the Bombay Correspondent reported (in spite of previous official denials) that Gandhiji was in correspondence with three British Ministers, including Sir Samuel Hoare, from Yerawada prison and that "they can't be love letters", the London Correspondent criticised the attitude of Indian Liberals. He wrote "If Indian Liberals or moderates are to be criticised at all it should be on the ground, that they have protested not too much but too little against what has been going on around them. A few of them have spoken out strongly enough in their individual capacity but there seems to have been very little organised opposition to the policy of the ordinances and not much insistence upon those features of a new constitution which every Democrat must hold to be essential. Many people in this country have been surprised at the meekness with which the Indian legislatures have acquiesced in the suppression of public rights. Protests have been made here and there, it is true, but having regard to the predominantly Indian representation on all these bodies, the complacency with which most of them have regarded the recent proceedings of the Government have been more than disquieting. By their inaction elsewhere the Moderates have also strengthened the impression that they do not count in the public life of India".

Closely following this dispatch, an appeal to the Viceroy to abandon the policy of repression and secure the co-operation of Gandhiji and the Congress towards an agreed settlement on the future of the country was carried in The Hindu on June 24, 1932 over the signatures of well known South Indian Moderates including T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, Yakub Hasan, M. Ramachandra Rao and R. N. Arokyaswami Mudaliar. In the course of the appeal they referred to police beatings of Satyagrahis and said: "The spectacle, therefore, of policemen throughout the country using force in a manner now so well known

on Indians, old and young, men and women of high status and education as well as of the common class, who do not retaliate but suffer the violence of the blows without flinching, is one whose effect in undermining the moral authority of the present government and its masters in Great Britain can hardly be exaggerated".

Endorsing the appeal The Hindu stressed the need to evolve a machinery for the achievement of broad agreement between the two nations and said: "It cannot come into existence unless the co-operation of the country as a whole is secured".

On June 27, 1932 it was announced in London and Simla that the Government had decided to give effect to constitutional changes through a suitable bill which would "provide alike for autonomous constitutions in the provinces and for federation of provinces and states. They intend that this measure shall contain provisions for enabling provincial constitutions to be introduced without necessarily awaiting the completion of all steps required for the actual inauguration of the Federation".

The Hindu noted that the announcement made it clear that no attempt "is to be made to remove the obstacles to the free and full co-operation of really representative Indian opinion and secondly that an agreed settlement which was the *raison d'être* of the R.T.C. does not remain the objective of the Government whose proposals constitute practically a throw back to the procedure contemplated on the publication of the Simon Report and before the Labour Government realised that only the conference plan would gain the support and co-operation of the Indian public. We are by no means enamoured of these long drawn conferences and we would welcome every effort to expedite a solution and settlement of the Indian issue but this should be by the methods of conciliation, negotiation and conference with those who represent and can deliver the goods on behalf of the people of India and not by the fiat of the Conservative back-benchers".

The Hindu was apprehensive that if the stipulated condition for the ushering in of the federal scheme were not fulfilled then the proposed bill may be introduced with only the provincial autonomy scheme and "it is this development that Indian opinion has foreseen and opposed all along".

A significant development took place when on July 9, 1932, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M. R. Jayakar wrote to the Viceroy resigning their membership of the Consultative Committee formed as a result of the R. T. C. since they felt that the "pledges solemnly given by British statesmen before and during the R.T.C., notably by the Prime Minister, have been abandoned and for the moment the forces of reaction have succeeded in England in scotching the method (of consultation) which always appeared unpopular in the extreme Conservative circles".

Sir Tej said in his letter. "I submit if there is to be a federation on an all India basis it must be the result of a tripartite agreement between H. M.'s Government, British India and Indian states which ultimately must receive the sanction of Parliament. I venture to think that no room is left under the new procedure for any such agreements being arrived at before the Joint Select Committee".

The Hindu hailed the resignation of Sapru and Jayakar as a "vindication of their self-respect and their profound belief in the utter futility of the new

procedure" It added: "The acceptance by the Viceroy of the resignations, it is obvious, must be interpreted as constituting the final and irrevocable winding up of the R.T.C — a course which every member of the R.T.C. who went to England twice on invitation at great sacrifice in the hope of a pacific settlement and who expected in spite of difficulties to persevere in that method, is bound to resent. What then is the course of action which must now be pursued? A recognition of the grave situation created by the new policy of H. M's Government necessitates united action on the part of all parties in India similar to and even more effective than that taken when the Simon Commission was boycotted by every party worth the name in the country and national representatives decided to produce an agreed constitution which eventually resulted in the famous report called after the great patriot and statesman — Pandit Motilal Nehru. Nothing less than that is called for and expected by the country in this crisis".

A conference of R.T.C. delegates in Bombay on July 10, 1932 denounced the new procedure announced by the British Government for constitutional reforms and said "The new procedure is entirely different in substance and spirit from the conference method as expounded by Lord Irwin in October, 1929 and July, 1930 and by the Premier in December, 1931. They (the delegates) consider the new procedure is symptomatic of a new policy and cannot produce in any event a constitution at all so satisfactory as that which the conference method was designed to produce. The result is bound to be great aggravation of the evils of the present situation. It is the considered and emphatic conclusion of the signatories that the maintenance of the conference method is, as it was, an essential condition of their co-operation and support". The signatories included A. Rangaswami Iyengar, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and B. Shiva Rao.

The London Correspondent cabled on July 10. "The withdrawal of Indian Liberal leaders from the Consultative Committee has impressed Government with the serious extent of the opposition to the new procedure. It is expected Mr. MacDonald will shortly endeavour to re-establish the confidence of the Moderates in British bonafides".

A. S. K. Iyengar, who was one of the leading and influential reporters of the Associated Press of India and also a Special Correspondent of The Hindu in Delhi (from 1927 to 1935) in his book, "All through the Gandhian era" quotes a conversation he had with the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, on this controversy. Hoare asked Iyengar "By the way are you any relation of A. Rangaswami Iyengar who came here last year at the time of the Round Table Conference?"

Iyengar: We belong to the same clan.

Hoare: The Hindu is a marvellous paper, isn't it?

Iyengar: Yes. It is a very influential paper.

Hoare: How is it that even The Hindu has criticised me for the speech that I delivered in the House of Commons, on January 29?

Iyengar: Well, you can't expect The Hindu to take any other line.

Hoare: I find that Sir Tej, Jayakar and others have resigned from the R.T.C. in protest against my speech . . . . I will tell you what I had in mind. Would you please help in drafting a message for India.

A. S. K. Iyengar flashed the interview through Reuter and Sir Samuel Hoare's clarification enabled Sapru and Jayakar to withdraw their resignations as a prelude to the Third R.T.C.

Indian politics moved from one crisis to another and tension was never ending. When the British Prime Minister announced his Communal Award, which he took upon himself to do in the absence of agreement at the R.T.C., it provoked Gandhiji to launch his fast unto death. The award, pronounced in August, 1932, had provided among other things for separate electorates for the Depressed Classes and this Gandhiji considered as a vivisection of the Hindu community.

The Hindu said: "We have repeatedly pointed out that the creation of separate electorates for them (Depressed Classes) is unwise and unwarranted and would have the effect of nullifying the good that would result from allowing the Depressed Classes to vote in general electorates. If the effect of the present proposals is to further divide them off from the Hindu community it would be, as Mahatma Gandhi pleaded before the R.T.C., disastrous in their own interests."

Gandhiji's decision to go on a fast unto death was officially announced from Simla on September 13, 1932. Gandhiji had notified the Government of his intention in a letter to Sir Samuel Hoare in which he also made some biting comments on the way decisions were taken on vital matters in Britain. "My recent visit to England has confirmed my opinion that your democracy is a superficial circumscribed thing. In the weightiest matters decisions are taken by individuals or groups without any reference to the Parliament and these have been ratified by members having but a vague notion of what they were doing. Such was the case with Egypt and the war of 1914 and such is the case with India. My whole being rebels against the idea that in a system called democratic one man should have unfettered power affecting the destiny of an ancient people numbering over 300 millions and that his decisions can be enforced by mobilising the most terrible forces of destruction. To me this is a negation of democracy".

The Hindu hoped the Hindu community and the Depressed Classes would see the dangers of the Communal Award as "revealed by the searchlight of Mahatmaji's clear vision" and agree without delay on a settlement which would make for real unity. The Hindu wrote a leader almost daily urging the two communities to unite and save Mahatma's life. Under the heading, "The Hour of Trial" it wrote on September 19 "Tomorrow is India's hour of trial. There hangs in the balance not only the life of her great leader but also that national unity without which Swaraj must remain a delusion. The wonderful surge of feeling that Gandhiji's resolve has produced throughout the country shows that the heart and conscience of the people have been deeply touched. It is for the leaders to give form and shape to this generous emotion and to harness it to a task of social amelioration by the side of which the mightiest constructive efforts of the past pale into insignificance".

As Gandhiji began his fast on September 20 efforts were started to promote a settlement between caste Hindus and the Depressed Classes. The talks were held in Poona and among the prime movers were Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Depressed Classes leader, and C. Rajagopalachari and within four days a settlement was reached, satisfactory to Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhiji. As The

Hindu flashed the news from its Bombay Correspondent on September 24: Poona, September 24 (3 p m) · "A settlement has been reached!", it came out with a quick but short editorial which said · "The glad tidings have been received that a settlement has been reached between Mahatmaji and the leader of the Depressed Classes and of other sections of Hindus. The news that Gandhiji's condition is not altogether satisfactory, that the prolonged interviews and discussions have been a great strain on his strength and that the continuance of the fast may place serious obstacles in the way of his recovery makes it necessary that everything should be done to enable him to break the fast without delay."

On September 26, the Home Member of the Government of India announced in the Assembly of the acceptance by the British Government of the Poona settlement and Gandhiji broke his fast the same day in the evening. The Mahatma sipped the glass of sweet lime juice handed over to him by Mrs. Kamala Nehru as Poet Tagore sang a song from his "Gitanjali" in a low thrilling voice. There were three untouchable fellow prisoners in the gathering to highlight the significance of the occasion.

The Poona Pact provided for a primary election of a panel of candidates by the Depressed Classes who would then contest from the general electorate. The Hindu said the Pact "ushers in a new era in the history of India's struggle. Not only does it lay the axe at the root of those psychological factors which have so long bolstered up untouchability; it demonstrates, as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru rightly said, our ability to compose our domestic differences." The Hindu added that the Pact had a moral for the Government too. "What was regarded by them and by many others as a settled fact has been unsettled in a manner which should make them realise that they would be throwing away a splendid opportunity to bring peace and contentment to India if they persisted in their refusal to take any step to secure the co-operation of Gandhiji and the Congress. The so-called dual policy has been a disastrous failure; terrorism still stalks the land. . . while political discontent has become chronic and bitterness is increasing day by day. . . The Government apparently can think of nothing better by way of meeting the situation than loading the ordinary criminal law with offences and penalties which are unknown to any other criminal code and making a feeble attempt to revive the dead conference method. Life can be breathed into it only if the Government abandon repression in favour of conciliation".

As Gandhiji broke his fast, the Government withdrew from him the privileges given to him to correspond and receive letters on Harijan Welfare (Harijan was the new name he had given to the Depressed Classes, "Children of God", he called them), and also to receive visitors in this connection. This action, "lacking in imagination, consideration and statesmanship alike" as The Hindu put it, portended another crisis so much so a foreign Correspondent wrote to a friend (which was quoted by the Delhi Correspondent of The Hindu) · "I am wrestling with the Manchurian situation but it is a dull story devoid of human values. I long to have my little Ahmedabad saint back. There was a story in every gesture of his".

Gandhiji's fast on behalf of the Depressed Classes and his call for temple entry for these excluded classes started a big debate in the columns of The Hindu. Day after day the paper published long letters from learned men and

religious scholars on the pros and cons of the controversy Gandhi himself vigorously pursued the campaign from prison issuing a statement almost every day extending to a column and more, and justifying his threat of another fast if the Guruvayur (in Malabar) temple was not thrown open to Harijans as a result of the referendum which he favoured. To *The Hindu* which threw its columns to the flames of controversy space was no consideration. The letters on this subject daily covered two pages. The volume was still so big that the Editor was forced to print the following note in the Correspondence column: "We have been giving very large space for the publication of news and views on temple entry in our columns. The volume of correspondence has increased to such an extent that we find it increasingly difficult to find room for the heavy list of lengthy and often repetitive communications received from correspondents every day. Except in cases where the letters themselves are condensed we propose whenever it may be necessary to condense them and publish only the points from communications sent to us in future".

J. T. Gwynn I.C.S. (Retd.) a frequent contributor, reflected the wide interest aroused in England and other Western countries on the temple entry controversy when he wrote to *The Hindu*: "Nothing that has appeared in the Indian papers for the last 10 years seems to me of more interest than the temple entry controversy which has been conducted in the correspondence columns of *The Hindu* and we all owe to the Editor gratitude for his liberal allowance of space to the subject. For at least the letters help us, Westerners, to understand the way different sections of the Hindu community now look at their own religion".

*The Hindu* had earlier in May, 1932, promoted a debate on India by two Englishmen in its columns. It began with an article by "An Englishman in India", who pleaded for a change in the attitude of the British in India and greater social contacts between the Englishmen and Indians. *The Hindu* after publishing this invited opinions and comments from other Englishmen.

An Englishman who signed himself "one who wishes India better", wrote on the benefits of British rule, the ingratitude of Indians, and the insults they offered to British royalty and institutions and wanted Indians to co-operate with the British in the training for self-Government.

Replying to this "An Englishman in India" wrote: "We have done a lot for India, an enormous lot, but in weighing it all up we should never forget that in doing a lot for India we have simultaneously done a lot for ourselves and also that we have been prodigiously well paid for our services. Speaking perfectly frankly, references to the 'lives lost, health ruined, the family separations' and (what is so often added) 'the selflessness of those forefathers of ours who bore the heat and burden of the day' always make me squirm. There is an unctuousness about such phrases, a hint of disinterestedness that does not ring true, an ignoble claim to nobility, which to me reveals a lack of precisely that "sportsmanship" which is sometimes so marked a characteristic of Britishers. Even if our motives in all that we have done for India has been immaculate one could hardly expect Indians to see them in that light. If we are going to recall the labours of our ancestors in bringing law and order into the country, Indians may recall the widespread destruction of their textile industry early last century by, among other things, imposition of prohibitive import duties in England on fine Indian fabric. But what is the good of appealing to the distant

past? None of us really stops in his daily rounds to contemplate the doings of his ancestors. My opponent writes. 'Whatabout the insults offered to England during the last 12 years . the rudeness to the Simon Commission which was an insult to Government of England?' May I ask him what about (for example) the habitual treatment by Britishers of high class Indian passengers in trains? And if 'Simon, Go back' on placards is an insult to the British Government, what is "For Europeans only" painted in seats on office waiting rooms? Really it hardly behoves us to complain of insults"

The Correspondent after further analysis of his countrymen's arguments against Indians concluded: "Once again I beg my opponent and my fellow countrymen generally, to forget all the old clichés about our selfless devotion to India and to prove by a display of genuine goodwill that the declarations of Viceroy etc are not empty".

A third Englishman, who signed himself, "An Englishman who wishes India better", entered the ring and posed the question: "Why are social relations between the English and Indians so limited?" He answered it by saying that there were four main reasons for it, namely, the Indian mutiny, caste, purdah and difference in culture. He said the Mutiny with its "massacres" of Englishmen and women put an end to the friendly feeling between the two races until then "Consequently it must be remembered that most of the older generations of the English in India are people brought up in the shadow of the Mutiny, people whose fathers perhaps, and grandfathers certainly, were alive at the time even if not actually in the Mutiny. Those generations are now rather too set mentally for it to be possible or even fair to expect them to change their ideas. One cannot expect people under such a cloud to cultivate intimate relations with Indians and may be the same applied to the older generations of Indians who may hold similar sentiments towards the English" After explaining the other reasons he had mentioned the writer concluded by appealing to the Press, especially the vernacular Press to cease attacking the English and adopt a truce analogous to the "Truce of the Gods" in the early middle ages which limited fighting to three days a week, and only chastise the English three days a week, devoting the other three days to the more worthy duty of bringing the two peoples together.

The Hindu published the following from its Anantapur Correspondent on June 19, 1932: "Day by day reports are confirming the rumour of a strange incident that happened at the Hanesamudram in Madakasira taluk about the beginning of this month. An aged "juvai" tree had fallen down in the village and the same had been auctioned by the Revenue Department as a dead tree and the purchaser had cut off its branches and leaves and left the bare trunk to dry. A few days after this one fine morning when the shepherd boys were grazing their cattle near the old trunk, it suddenly raised itself making a big noise and stood erect. The boys saw the rising of the trunk and got up frightened, thinking it must be the work of some strange demon. News of this spread all over the neighbourhood and villagers came and saw the bare trunk of the old tree standing erect. Being superstitious they offered coconuts and other things to the tree

"This miracle is attributed by them to the power of an old cobra whose abode the tree once happened to be. In order to regain its lost shelter, it is supposed the cobra made this tree stand up. For the past fortnight the village has

become a regular centre of pilgrimage and people are flocking to see the miracle”.

A reader, K. K. Nambiar, referring to the story in a letter recalled another similar incident in Salem three years previously. He said: “An avenue tree on the Salem-Cuddalore Road belonging to the ‘Karuvel’ species fell across the road having been partially uprooted by a strong gale. The overseer in charge of the road sold the “dead” tree in auction as usual. A ryot who purchased the tree cut and removed two of its branches nearest to the ground. That night there was heavy rain and early next morning the tree was found standing erect to the amazement of the neighbours. Of course, a demon was associated with the affair and old people solemnly shook their heads. The purchaser did neither pursue his claim for the tree nor ask for any refund of the money paid for it as he was content if the demon did not retaliate for his having mutilated it. The tree is flourishing even to this day. The phenomenon is capable of a scientific explanation and it is to be noted that the tree stands in black cotton soil”.

But to the knowledge of this researcher of *The Hindu* no scientist seems to have come forward to offer any explanation for this unique phenomenon.

The pleasure of walking alone was the theme of a letter by a reader published in August 1932. “We often hear people saying that if we take a walk we should have a friend to talk to. I will just point out the immense benefits of taking a walk alone. When we walk alone, we breathe through our nostrils and our breath is natural, rhythmical and conducive to health. The air entering the lungs through the nostrils is always invigorating and strengthens the lungs. But we talk while walking and we have to breathe through the mouth. This is unnatural and harmful to the lungs and should therefore be avoided. God breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of man, not into his mouth. It is said that Kant, the great philosopher, used always to walk alone and hence he lived up to a good old age”.

The *Hindu* could be sweet and pleasant in acknowledging an editorial error as in this case: “In our comment on the *Patrika* case yesterday (August 22, 1932) there occurred a slip of the pen which was as startling in effect as, need we say, it was unpremeditated in origin. “Mahatma Gandhi’s campaign against (sic) Khaddar and prohibition” was a bull’s eye for the imp of mischief that dogs the footsteps of the leader writer. But we are consoled by the reflection that our readers must regard his prank with an indulgent eye as it was so well calculated to add to their gaiety”.



**T**HE YEAR 1932 was notable for still more expanded coverage of foreign affairs in The Hindu through special articles. On April 4, 1932, The Hindu announced it had secured exclusive rights through an arrangement with the Daily Herald of London and mouthpiece of the Labour Party for reproduction of articles appearing in it by wellknown authors, journalists and politicians and in the next few years The Hindu readers were able to read regularly almost every article of significance which appeared in the Daily Herald. Labour Members of Parliament and politicians, who were popular in nationalist India as friends of her freedom struggle, by their writings in the daily and in the Illustrated Weekly edition (which made its bow in 1928) roused the patriotic feelings and hopes of the people to new pitch. In March The Hindu had introduced to its readers H. Peel Adam "a very talented English journalist in Paris" whose first European letter it carried and said it would be a fortnightly feature which would give a "general and critical survey of European developments". Besides its regular Correspondents in European capitals who wrote at periodic intervals, these additional articles and features made foreign coverage full and complete. To augment it still further if not make it overflow but very welcome nevertheless came the first article on the Geneva Disarmament Conference in March 1932 from the pen of V. K. Krishna Menon who was to become a world celebrity in free India.

Titled, "Collapse of a continent", Krishna Menon M.A B.Sc (as was stated in the byline) began his article thus: "The meeting of the nations at Geneva recalls in many respects the historic gathering at Vienna in 1815. There is behind and within the disarmament conference all those conflicting currents of idealism and ambition, of national aspirations and international compulsions and the futile attempts to make phraseology the substitute for fact. As at Vienna Geneva lacks nothing in hospitality or in the brilliance of its social functions. Prince Metternich was no doubt a more accomplished host than Mr Arthur Henderson or Sir Eric Drummond will ever be, but in the modern world where conferences have become a feature of national and international life delegates take on the duty of hosts themselves and may, like the members of the R.T.C. play the role of hosts in a foreign country. Again as at Vienna the conflict between schemes and dreams and the insistent compelling force of the schemer as against the dreamer is becoming more apparent. In 1931,

Litvinov (Soviet Foreign Minister) threw a bombshell at the Disarmament Conference by asking for total disarmament then and there. Today France with greater method in her madness has sprung a surprise at the Assembly at Geneva by asking for the creation of a world army, fleet and air force to maintain status quo. There is in the declaration of France, all that appeal of phrase which makes it fit into the background of Geneva and recalls Vienna and the bombastic manifestos of Tsar Alexander. The inescapable fact, however, is that the Disarmament Conference meets in the shadow of the collapse of a continent".

In March, 1933, Krishna Menon contributed another article on "Europe under Dictators". He wrote, "No one today believes that the Great War was fought to make the world safe for democracy. Not even the most cynical of the war statesmen and patriots would be unimpressed by the perverse results of their handiwork. A Sir Edward Grey, a President Wilson or an Asquith would have little believed that within the short period since the conclusion of the war which was for the preservation of democracy almost every country in Western Europe and in westernised Asia would have become a dictatorship of one kind or another. From Jutland to Bering Straits the world of today wears a cynical smile for those who talked of democracy in 1914"

Krishna Menon continued to write for *The Hindu* during 1933. He wrote a piece on Iraq and another from London on British Labour and India. He reported an exclusive interview with George Lansbury, leader of the Labour Party.

Another notable contributor on foreign affairs was Dr. R. M. Lohia (who later became a firebrand of the opposition in post-freedom Nehru era) whose first article was on Hitlerism in Germany. *The Hindu* introduced the article with this note: Mr. Lohia has just returned from Germany after a stay of four years during which he took a course in political economy, history and philosophy in the University of Berlin. His thesis for the doctorate degree of philosophy which he eventually took with honours was "The taxation of salt in India" dealing with its historical as well as its financial and political importance. In Berlin he was for sometime the Secretary of the Hindustan Association of Central Europe".

Dr. Lanka Sundaram wrote regularly for *The Hindu* from Europe and his contributions were published as "our European letter".

Jawaharlal Nehru was a favourite contributor to *The Hindu*. We have already mentioned his articles on Russia exclusively written for it. In October, 1933, soon after his release from prison to attend on his ailing mother, he wrote a series of articles under the title "Whither India?" He began the first with these words: "The newcomer from prison has long been cut off from the rough and tumble of life and politics and yet he has a certain advantage on his side. He can take a more detached view, he is not as much wrapped up in the controversies of the moment; he may be able to stress principles when others argue about petty tactics; he may actually see the realities under the surface of ever changing phenomena".

This is how Nehru described politicians: "On the gaily decked official stage of India or England phantom figures come and go, posing for a while as great statesmen; Round Tablers flit about like pale shadows of those who created them, engaged in pitiful and interminable talk which interests few and affects an even smaller number. Their main concern is how to save the vested interests of various classes or groups, their main diversion, apart from

feasting, is self-praise. Others blissfully ignorant of all that has happened in the last century still talk the jargon of the Victorian age and are surprised and resentful that nobody listens to them. Even the nasmyth hammer of war and revolution and world change has failed to produce the slightest dent on their remarkably hard heads".

Again "Our politics must either be those of magic or of science. The former of course requires no argument or logic, the latter is in theory at least based on clarity of thought and reasoning and has no room for vague idealistic or religious or sentimental processes which confuse and befog the mind. Personally, I have no faith in or use for the ways of magic or religion and I can only consider the question on scientific grounds"

Nehru concluded the series with the question Whither India? "Surely to the great human goal of social and economic equality, to the ending of all exploitation of nation by nation and class by class, to national freedom within the framework of an international co-operative socialist world federation. This is not such an empty idealist dream as some people imagine. It is within the range of practical politics of today and the near future. We may not have it within our grasp but those with vision can see it emerging on the horizon. And even if there be delay in the realisation of our goal what does it matter if our steps march in right direction and our eyes look steadily in front. For in the pursuit itself of a mighty purpose there is joy and happiness and a measure of achievement. As Bernard Shaw has said. 'This is the true joy of life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one, the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown out on the scrap heap, the being a force of nature, instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy'".

The Hindu, as we have pointed out, catered to a variety of tastes and views and aptitudes. In it everyone found something he liked to read or know about. During the period the cinema page made its appearance and it was to be a regular Friday feature until the war when it disappeared temporarily. A Hollywood Correspondent wrote a column for it and there were articles on Indian and foreign films and autographed pictures of foreign and Indian stars. There was a weekly gardening page also which was a popular feature later under B. S. Nirody.

C.R.S. (C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar) gave a weekly review of new releases of gramophone records and there were reviews of week-end music concerts by a columnist, "Sabari". But the most popular item in the Saturday page was the short story and "S. V. V." was as popular and perhaps had as many if not more fans than cinema stars. "S V V.", who shared the page on alternative weeks with Hilton Brown I C S., had a racy and expressive style and wrote in an idiom which was familiar and nostalgic to the South Indian.

Here is an extract from his piece, "on dreams" which describes a dream "All of a sudden I was bowling for dear life in a cricket match with Gandhi for the wicket-keeper and having for fieldsmen, Annie Besant, Lord Birkenhead, Ramana Maharishi and Rabindranath Tagore. My servant Murugan was "batting" furiously with a road mender's pick axe. Just as Annie Besant was running after a ball heading for the boundary, a rat scampered over me and I awoke with a jolt and pinched myself to be sure that I was not dead but was still alive. Thus ended for me a far from perfect night. But then would not dreams

be the jolliest things if only we could command the ones that we desire. I for my part would like to dream that I am H. G. Wells or Bernard Shaw and then I would know what it is to be a literary man with an income running over five figures in pound sterling". A constructive aspect of S. V. V.'s dream story was pointed out by "V. V. S." (V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar, well-known lawyer and judge of the Madras High Court and a great patron of fine arts) who wrote: "My friend S. V. V. who is endowed with a genius for all kinds of inversions (including initials) has given — and he cannot help it — a real comic twist to the study of dreams. It is a perusal of this article because of its comic setting that has made me think of the topic. The readers of *The Hindu* who have had placed before them the comic aspect of dreams may well deign for a moment to consider the other side. If only our students and professors of philosophy, will earnestly band themselves together and begin the serious study of this phenomenon, I am sure a day will come sooner than later when we shall be able to account for even the familiar dreams of S. V. V."

"The most well-known series of short story written by S. V. V. was called "My wife and I" — an extract from which we have already seen when we discussed *The Hindu's* attitude to nautch girls. Here we shall give a glimpse of the geography of Madras as recounted by S. V. V. in that series.

"Law College. Where B. L's are manufactured so many by the hour like Ford cars and sent adrift into the world with high endeavours and prodigious futility".

"In front of the High Court is Dr. Miller's statue watching the Christian College where students learn their lessons betwixt intervals of stamping the gallery, a traditional habit of which the college is abnormally proud".

"Legislative Council. Where all the talking of the country is done. It was estimated by a scientific statesman that if all the talking done there could be rolled into a hollow ball it would travel to Mars by its own gas.

"Madras University: For its vigorous existence for nearly three-quarters of a century, qualitatively it has not produced one poet, one philosopher, one physicist, one chemist, one biologist, one inventor or one anybody who can be said to have added a millionth share to the sum total of human knowledge and attained internal or international fame of any importance except perhaps a research scholar or two who establish by clinching arguments that the English interjection, 'Thank you' is only a variation of the Tamil 'Thengai Odai' and that therefore the original abode of the Englishman must have been the Tamil land.

"Triplicane: Beyond the Senate House is Triplicane a civilised variation of its original Tamil name, 'Tiruvallikeni'. It is inhabited mostly by middling officials (of the Secretariat, Board of Revenue and the A. G.'s Office) by school-masters, bank managers, Sanskrit and Tamil pandits and University clerks. All the men in Triplicane are graduates and almost all of them are cricket and tennis enthusiasts. In the mornings after coffee and before going to office they meet in groups in street pials, discuss the day's news and carry on heated arguments to settle such questions as whether Gandhi is a saint or an imposter and whether the advocates of temple-entry make asses of themselves or are really benefactors of Hindu society. And always they discuss with great heat and no decision.

"Every fourth house in Triplicane contains a racing astrologer, each a Sepharial, though none of them has yet been known to have predicted the correct horse. No one can live in Triplicane without the rest of Triplicane.

knowing him The peculiar characteristic of the women of the place, particularly of the Brahmin portion, is an obstinate desire to drink well water for the sake of peity without regard to hygiene. And the peculiar characteristic of the men is their intense suburban patriotism They would never concede that there is any place healthier than Triplicane and they would clout you on the head if you tell them that Mylapore is intellectually or in any other manner superior to it They hold the proud belief that Triplicane is the intellectual hub of the universe There is a famous temple here with a tank in front of it with water covered green and consequently held more sacred into which at least four unwary pedestrians walk every month mistaking it for a mossy lawn, get drowned and submit to post-mortem examination

"Mylapore. Further south of Triplicane is Mylapore the aristocratic centre of the metropolis inhabited mostly by leading advocates and high Government officials, both in office and in retirement Its atmosphere is so surcharged with law that even motor horns hoot only affidavits, appeal memos and Latin legal maxims Unlike Triplicane the women here are more advanced than men. Men are mostly sanathanists, organise Gita lectures, Ramayana Kalakshepams and bhajana ghostis. They do elaborate pujas in the mornings, wear diamonds in the ear, vibhutis on their face, and rudraksha or thulasimala round the neck — at once showing worldly prosperity as well as spiritual soundness, while women wear spectacles, organise ladies clubs, play tennis, and go about in cars, visiting friends or lecturing in support of the Sarda Act, legislation for easy divorces and the desirability of each family attaching an Adi-Dravida as an honoured guest In fact, it is a lovely arcadian suburb full of trees and groves and inhabited by high brow people of wealth, intellect, position and influence.

"Guindy. Guindy is the place where races are held at stated seasons of the year. On race days the whole city gets empty and congregates at the course, from H. E. the Governor of Madras down to Muniammal, the vegetable seller. A race course is the most democratic place in the world. It would be nothing surprising if a Secretary to Government should take Muniammal aside and request her to whisper in his ears the name of the winner. And mind you, Muniammal knows the birth, upbringing and idiosyncracies of every horse that runs in the race even better than the owner himself. It is really staggering what an amount of money passes from the hands of the visitors through the small apertures of the ticket-selling windows. Guindy is the bottomless sink into which all the wealth, earned or borrowed in the city, disappears without leaving a trace behind".

In a tribute to S. V. V. on his 60th birthday on August 26, 1940, The Hindu said: "S. V. V. is timeless. Like Elia, Mark Twain and Lewis Carol he has with his pen name conjured out of the vasty deep a personality larger than life and living in a world of its own creation. That world contacts everyday reality at many points but is not imprisoned in it; it envelops it on the other hand in a bright and hilarious haze which reveals beauty in drabness and joy in the heart of tedium Mr. Vijayaraghavachariar is a genial, cultured and modest man who rejoices in many friends, but "S. V. V."s friends are numberless ... On this auspicious occasion The Hindu, which remembers with legitimate satisfaction that S. V. V. made his first appearance in its columns adds its felicitations and good wishes to those of his numerous admirers".

And when S. V. V. passed away in June 1950, *The Hindu* in a tribute, said "S. V. V. was popular for much the same reason as Charlie Chaplin, that is, he took the small man, the householder with a load of troubles on his back and showed him as the victim of the minor worries of life. This figure which the average reader could recognise as himself was highly resilient, capable of laughing at his mishaps and enjoying them in recollection. The social analyst would find that S. V. V. was a conservative in outlook laughing most heartily at the paraphernalia of modern life, the motor car, shoes and sandals, the fashionably dressed woman, the college man and it must be added the very newspapers in which his articles appeared. . . S. V. V. has assured himself immortality through his many books and novels. . . He has had many imitators but nobody has equalled his gaiety".

The Indian rope trick was and even now a perennial topic of discussion in the Indian and foreign press. It was so in 1933 also. A reader, N. Narayanan from Madras, wrote on January 7, 1933. "I was one who witnessed the rope trick actually performed before several thousands of spectators opposite to Crawford Market in Bombay in May 1928. We saw the trick performed successfully and there was a dispute among the audience whether the trick did really happen and within a very few minutes a movie cameraman was called in and the performance took place while the scene was shot. We saw the trick once over but the very next day when the film depicting the performance was shown we found that the rope as soon as it was thrown up simply came down and was lying on the ground, while the boy who climbed was merely tugging at the air. What we actually saw was not proved by the camera and on reference to the fakir of this strange phenomenon we found that the whole of the audience was mesmerised in a mass and all magicians admit there is a thing called mass mesmerism wherein we actually see, hear and feel certain things which actually do not take place. (The rope trick is supposed to be a feat in which a rope is thrown into the air and stays there without any support and a boy climbs it and disappears).

Another reader from Sussex, England, Lt. Col. Ralph Nicholson, wrote on January 30 that he was in entire agreement with a previous correspondent in his belief that the rope trick was a genuine feat performed in India "despite the efforts of some Europeans to deny its existence". He added he had himself met a gentleman in Mysore "who had been fortunate enough to see the trick on the maidan in front of the courts of justice at Madras. What is so astonishing is that out of the great number of people who have witnessed this feat there should be so few who have written out an account of it. But even so those who have are credible witnesses and in the face of so much testimony it is absurd to deny the existence of the trick".

The correspondence on this subject was started in *The Hindu* by a letter from a reader who criticised the view expressed by Sir Eric Dennison Ross, the orientalist, that the rope trick was a myth. V. Rangacharya, the correspondent, quoted an account by Dr. Heasoldt in the *Occult Review* of the performance of the rope trick by a sadhu in Baroda. Dr. Heasoldt said he saw the miraculous feat on four different occasions.

One of the earliest victims of Nazi terror in Germany in the first months of 1933 was *The Hindu's* Berlin Correspondent A. C. N. Nambiar. The news of his arrest by the Nazis with that of another Indian, Naidoo, appeared in *The*

Hindu from Reuter on March 10 Reuter said that in reply to a question in the House of Commons, Mr Stanley Baldwin informed members that the British Ambassador was in touch with the German authorities. It was however understood unofficially that Mr Naidoo had been released.

Nambiar himself later gave the readers of *The Hindu* a detailed account of his arrest and release by the Nazis. In an article datelined Berlin April 2, Nambiar said the day following the Reichstag fire, as he was reading the afternoon papers in his flat, "six storm troopers entered my flat. With loaded revolvers raised to my face and threat of being shot immediately in the event of my resistance, they asked me to follow them to a car that waited outside. No policeman in uniform or in civil dress accompanied the storm troopers who looked and acted as wild and blood thirsty men. No writ or warrant was shown to me; no order to institute a house search produced. I was given no opportunity to communicate with anyone. While I was escorted to the car, four of the Storm Troopers stayed back and after well over 15 minutes came back, loaded with many bundles. Among the things removed I could see my typewriter. I had no opportunity of computing what all were taken from my flat. No list was made, nothing was sealed or even properly packed".

Nambiar then described how he was taken to a S. A. station where he was "savagely assaulted by two Storm Troopers with leather whips. Later he was taken to a police station and landed in a solitary cell where he was kept for 24 days. He was released on March 25 and asked to leave Prussia within eight days. He wrote, "I have lived and worked in Berlin as an accredited journalist for well over nine years. I bear no ill will to Germany where I have spent several of the happiest years of my life or to the Germans among whom I have most of my best friends. I can claim to have done for the promotion of Indo-German cultural relations in practice more than any single private individual during the last many years. As a result of my writings and pamphlets issued by me hundreds of Indian students have visited Germany for study and practical training to the common advantage of both countries. My activities in this direction have been viewed with appreciation by the German authorities concerned. I am led to consider the action against me as one of a local S. A. group acting on information obtained from an irresponsible source, in other words, as resulting from a denunciation. I consider and maintain the action against me as a grave wrong which personally has caused me heavy loss and damage".

Nambiar moved on to Prague and wrote weekly newsletters from the Czechoslovak capital but as fate would have it the Nazis came there too and with the invasion of Czechoslovakia, he disappeared, to be heard again only after India became independent and he joined the Indian diplomatic service.

Salivateswaran, the intrepid and alert man of *The Hindu* in Bombay, had the unique distinction of shepherding round Bernard Shaw, when the sage of St. Ayot Lawrence arrived in Bombay on board a luxury liner on January 8, 1933. Bearding the bearded lion on board the ship before the others of his tribe could catch up with him Salivatti managed to secure an exclusive story which he promptly wired to Madras. Later when the playwright came out on a launch for a stroll on Bombay streets, Salivatti accompanied him and they talked on English authors like Dickens and Thackeray. He took Shaw back to the port where the latter presented an autographed photograph of himself to the reporter. He told Salivatti he would stay in the ship for the eight days it was in

Bombay. "If you want to organise a pilgrimage from the remote corners of India to this boat you can. I am on show for eight days and there is no charge for admission".

The Hindu featured the Shaw story on the leader page spread over three columns. Among the many things Shaw said the most topical was his reference to "untouchables" in England. "As for untouchability", he said, "I am concerned with English untouchability. There is a large class of our working people who are treated as untouchables. We have millionaire capitalists. The untouchability problem is very acute in England. The English 'Touchable' will not probably object to the shadow of an 'untouchable' falling on him or her as you do in India but a storm will be raised if a labourer proposes to marry the daughter of a capitalist. The poor girl would very soon find herself as much an 'untouchable' as the 'untouchable' in India. This gives me quite a lot to think about, without my taking the Indian untouchability question".

In July, 1933, Frederick Grubb, the London Correspondent of The Hindu retired after a long and meritorious service. In his last London letter, which he had been writing every week for 22 years, dated June 30, Grubb bid farewell to his readers. "And now the time has come for me to lay down my pen as London Correspondent of The Hindu. I have occupied that honourable position for 22 years and nothing has ever happened during the whole of that time to disturb the mutual understanding which has existed between us. I have thus been able to keep up my weekly letters in unbroken continuity for nearly a quarter of a century (this one should be numbered I think 1056) which is probably a record in connection with such appointments. I have also for the last five years been sending almost daily cablegrams to your columns".

Grubb mentioned that he came to India as a delegate to the Madras session of the Congress in 1898. "So perhaps I may be written down as a veritable antediluvian whose retirement is long overdue! However I hope I may still be an occasional contributor to these pages".

Grubb also introduced to his readers his successor, Leonard W. Matters, former member of Parliament. "He is a well informed journalist of wide experience and will I am sure do full justice to the position he is about to take up".

In a tribute to its retiring Correspondent, The Hindu said Grubb's weekly letters had been marked by "accuracy, impartiality, and deep and discerning sympathy with India's aspirations". The paper published a two column picture of Grubb.

Grubb was an ardent temperance worker and it was in the cause of prohibition that he visited Madras in the 1890s and was introduced as such to the readers of The Hindu by the then London Correspondent. When the Congress Ministry in Madras in 1937 under the leadership of C. Rajagopalchari launched a limited prohibition programme Grubb wrote ecstatically about it in The Hindu.

Grubb was Private Secretary to W. S. Caine, M.P., before he took up the job of London Correspondent of The Hindu. Caine's close association with the British Committee of the Congress brought Grubb into intimate contact with Indian leaders. Describing his early years as Hindu Correspondent Grubb said: "I managed to compress all the work into a small room in my Wimbledon House. Every word had to be inscribed in my own handwriting (which



fortunately was fairly legible) and I had to act as my own office boy. This unpretentious house nevertheless became the haunt of many visitors from India, distinguished and obscure.

"Nor was the actual work limited to the little sanctum of which I have spoken. I made it my duty to be out and about early and late all over London in order to ensure the best and latest news for my Indian readers. There was hardly a meeting of any sort connected with India—political, social or artistic—which The Hindu representative failed to attend. . . . Much of my writing was done from the House of Commons itself, the main centre of all that was happening, where from 1892 onward I enjoyed special facilities in my additional capacity as Private Secretary to well known members of Parliament."

But before Grubb laid down his pen he had reported to his paper the beginning and end of the third Round Table Conference which shared the fate of the earlier ones. On November 18, 1932, he cabled: "The third R.T.C. assembled today but the conference can no longer be described in any sense as 'Round Table' as the seating arrangements today were unmistakably square! Although a much smaller body, the accommodation provided was very cramped and when all are present there will be some inconvenience. . . . The proceedings lasted only half an hour. Mr. MacDonald (Premier) looking worried and severely businesslike gave the impression that his chief anxiety was to hurry matters through as expeditiously as possible. Although he described the purpose as being to continue the work of the previous conference he said nothing to commit the Government to their conclusions and Sir Samuel Hoare's remarks were taken to mean that efforts would be made to circumscribe the discussions."

The Correspondent's misgivings were confirmed after the first week's proceedings and the Indian Liberals were disillusioned. "It is already evident", the Correspondent cabled on November 25, "that the motley delegations are only too likely to serve the astute purpose for which they have been selected. Even on questions where a majority of Indian members are agreed no definite decision is recorded unless the opposers consent. The principle of maximum agreement has been superseded by the demand for unanimity and this being impossible in such conditions Government reserves the decision to itself. Sir T. B. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar are seeking guarantees that the conclusions of the last conference set out by the Premier will be accepted as the basis of a constitution but even this pledge is not yet forthcoming. On the contrary, the Government is believed to favour more binding safeguards than any previously indicated, including practically the entire reservation of Central Finance, giving the Viceroy overriding powers to be exercised in consultation with a financial adviser to be appointed. Sir T. B. Sapru and his colleagues have protested beforehand that any such scheme reduces the executive responsibility to a farce and will be wholly unacceptable".

As the R.T.C. drew to a close towards end of December, Grubb, who had been covering the daily proceedings with a 1000-word cable, reported: "It has become increasingly clear in the last few days that there can be no definite agreement on several outstanding questions, the result being that the Government will formulate their own proposals in the white paper. If these are disclosed now their failure to convince would be obvious and protests more pronounced, especially from Indian Liberals, but Ministers still hope to

produce a scheme which while acceptable to moderate Indian opinion will also have the great advantage even from the Indian standpoint of passing both houses of Parliament without serious opposition".

The white paper referred to by the Correspondent was published in March, 1933. It provided for Provincial autonomy and the constitution of a Federation if a specified number of princely states acceded. The Hindu remarked there "is little in it that could not have been anticipated from the Government's attitude. What little there is, is not calculated to reassure India that the Government have not trucked to Mr. Churchill and his swashbucklers. Far from it; the statement made as a matter of course at the very outset, that the safeguards have been framed in the common interests of India and the United Kingdom makes plain enough the radical and unwelcome change of policy since the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The Government's proposals aim at not setting up a self-governing Federation conditioned by safeguards of a temporary self-eliminating character, but at maintaining virtually intact control of the Central Government from above and while setting up a legislature with a ministry, arming the Governor-General (and the Provincial Governors in a lesser measure) with almost despotic powers. Fear and distrust are the two dark threads that bind together many of these proposals for 'reform'—fear that the British control may be eliminated and distrust of the intentions of the Indian people towards British vested interests. The white paper proposes to impose a constitution on India which Britain judges is good enough for her and safe for Britain, India's wishes do not, one might think from reading it, matter any way".

The Hindu said: "Having laid down the basis of the constitution as one for 'the conversion of the present system of Government in India into a responsible Government of federation of states and provinces' subject only to transitional safeguards, they have sought to superimpose on that foundation in the name of reservations, safeguards and special responsibilities, a structure of irresponsibility as well as autocratic authority that must crush and destroy the foundations of responsible Government". The Hindu added: "The truth is that although a Federal constitution and Federal Legislature have been set up a parallel organisation of authority is also set up in the Governor-General who 'at his discretion' or under direction from Home can at any time effectively restrict their powers. This is not in respect of reserved subjects and responsibilities which are already excluded, but in respect of powers which they possess and of which they can be deprived in the name of one or other of the comprehensive safeguards".

The Hindu did not have much better to say about 'Provincial autonomy' either. "A closer examination of the provisions in this behalf shows that the Provincial Scheme introduces much less than provincial autonomy and that it will operate much more harmfully upon responsible self-government than even the present discredited system of dyarchy".

The Hindu said one of the reasons for it saying so was the enormous powers vested in the Governors in the category of special responsibilities. Another reason was the fact that the white paper "deliberately makes a definite break into this principle of responsibility of Ministers to the legislatures which was not thought of even in the case of dyarchic ministers. This was because the white paper contemplates cases in which the Ministers may agree with the Governor—we presume on their own personal responsibility—and disagree

with the legislature that put them in power and holds them responsible to itself for the advice tendered by them to the Governor"

In a four-column article the same month, V S Srinivasa Sastri criticised the white paper and said "What might have been the one clear gain of the third R T C is thrown into jeopardy by the white paper. In the spirit of hope which refuses to be killed, we looked for the glad news that the required half of the Indian states had promised to come into the new order of things and that Federation would be born soon after provincial autonomy. In vain does the chataka stretch his supplicatory throat before a dry cloud"

On March 30, 1933, *The Hindu* made a powerful plea for a reorientation of Congress policy and started a hornet's nest. There were angry protests from Congressmen and other reactions but *The Hindu* stuck to its guns.

After an exhaustive review of a debate in the House of Commons on the white paper, *The Hindu* came to this conclusion. "In view of what appears to be a deliberate and determined change of attitude towards Indian aspirations on the part of the ruling power, it is high time that the Congress and other political organisations in this country realised that this stiffening is primarily due to our weakness and disunion and seriously considered a reorientation of policy which would take note of realities and of practical political objectives and secure for India the full acceptance of the national demands on the part of British statesmen"

Almost a week later *The Hindu* wrote "The time has now arrived when Congressmen should seriously consider whether in the interest of the country the further pursuit of this (civil disobedience) movement would be either justified or fruitful and whether the Congress should not attempt a reorientation of policy and method in the pursuit of what are after all agreed national demands. What we should like Congressmen and nationalists to realise is that though the purposes for which the movement was started still remain to be realised, the forthcoming settlement of the constitution by the British Parliament has essentially altered the nature of the problem before the Congress and has thus raised afresh the question of the best method of tackling it. That the Constitution Act will not by any means satisfy the national demand is common ground with both Congressmen and non-Congressmen alike — in fact with all Indians except those who are essentially reactionary in their outlook. The consideration cannot however be ignored that in the new conditions created by the Constitution Act the satisfaction of the national demand may have to be sought along lines which should obviate the necessity for a campaign directly aiming at putting pressure on the British Government or Parliament. . . There are many compelling reasons, we would submit, why this step of calling off civil disobedience and re-uniting national forces in a joint effort to achieve full responsible Government and freedom for India should now be taken. In the first place the wide support and sympathy which the country generally gave to the Congress in the last three years and the phenomenal sacrifices made by thousands of the rank and file of Congress workers were sustained by the faith that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi would achieve the nation's aim as speedily as possible, but the campaign has involved a strain and effort, moral and material for the country far beyond normal anticipations especially in the unprecedented conditions of economic depression that have been witnessed during the period. Apart from this a desire for a more concrete and

constructive political programme aligned to the coming constitution in whose working large classes of our countrymen are bound to participate, is being increasingly felt and expressed by Congress workers. In the second place no one can ignore the fact that the principal cause of the failure to realise the national demand has been the division and disunion that unfortunately still exists among our countrymen on communal as well as on other vital issues. The continuance of the civil disobedience campaign, has, as has been found in actual experience, increased the difficulties of reaching communal unity and agreement on several political issues."

Leading South Indian Congressmen, including K. Nageswara Rao, C. N. Muthuranga Mudaliar and M. Bhaktavatsalam in a joint statement criticised The Hindu's appeal for the withdrawal of civil disobedience movement. A letter in a similar strain was written by the veteran Andhra Congressman, Konda Venkatappiah. The Hindu replying to them reiterated its plea that the time had come for a change of policy by the Congress.

In the midst of this controversy a bombshell was thrown by Gandhiji who announced on April 30 that he would undertake a 21-day "purificatory" fast beginning on May 8. The Hindu was startled and dismayed by his decision. It pointed out that he did not have the strength to withstand a 21-day fast, when even on the fifth day of his previous fast, the doctors had pronounced that the margin of safety had been passed. "His countrymen have therefore cause for the gravest anxiety as to the outcome of this decision."

A day after he commenced his fast Gandhiji was released from prison and he moved on to a private residence to continue his ordeal. He announced the suspension of the C.D. movement for a month and appealed to the Government to release political prisoners and withdraw ordinances.

The Hindu wrote that the suspension of the C.D. movement provided "a magnificent opportunity to retrieve the unhappy blunder that precipitated the deadlock in January last year." The paper made a spirited appeal at this "supreme hour of crisis" to its countrymen. "At no time was the need for unity, not only within the ranks of the Congress but among all sections of progressive opinion more urgent than it is today. Non-Congress nationalists who are as keen on the satisfaction of that demand as is the Congress, should realise that this will be possible only if the country presents a solid front to its opponents. If Mahatmajī's fast succeeds in uniting it in a dynamic endeavour to secure its birthright it will not have been in vain."

As Gandhiji's self-imposed ordeal dragged on, the correspondence columns were full of letters praying for the Mahatma's life but there was one by a man who signed himself "Kerala" which spoke of professional fasters who helped creditors to get back payment from their debtors. The Correspondent said in Kerala even in historical times "fast or *patni*" was used as a regular process for the collection of debts. "There were areas of Kerala where 'Pattini Nambi' is known to have been a regular institution. He was a brahmin and as a professional faster, offered services to any creditor left without any other way to recover his debt. Clean after the morning bath, his body besmeared with ash, with no stick or knife or sword or any other weapon of offence or defence, the Pattini-Nambi proceeds to the debtor and demands payment on behalf of the creditor. If the debtor does not pay there he squats at the gate. He will not drink or eat. But neither will he, by word or deed, injure the debtor in the least

With a Brahmin at the gate vowed not to eat and drink, the inmates of the house dare not in those days when men were simple, themselves eat or drink. In those days any debt would rather soon be paid or adjusted than that any person should court a course of such malignity and magnitude"

As Gandhiji completed two weeks of the 21-day fast and The Hindu expressed relief that the Mahatma had not lost his mental alertness and his unfailing humour and robust optimism had injected a new confidence into millions of his countrymen, an attack on his leadership came from a most unexpected quarter. Subhas Chandra Bose wrote to The Hindu from Vienna (where he had gone for medical treatment) on May 12, enclosing a joint statement issued by him and Vithalbhai J. Patel on the situation in India.

The statement said "The events of the last 13 years have demonstrated that a political warfare based on the principle of maximum suffering for ourselves and minimum suffering for our opponents cannot possibly lead to success. It is futile to expect that we can ever bring about a change of heart in our rulers merely through our own suffering or by trying to love them. And the latest action of Mahatma Gandhi in suspending the C.D. movement is a confession of failure so far as the present method of the Congress is concerned. We are clearly of opinion that as a political leader Mahatma Gandhi has failed. The time has therefore come for a radical reorganisation of the Congress on a new principle and with a new method. For bringing about this reorganisation a change of leadership is necessary for it would be unfair to Mahatma Gandhi to expect him to evolve or work a programme and method not consistent with his life-long principles. If the Congress as a whole can undergo this transformation it would be the best course. Failing that a new party will have to be formed within the Congress composed of all radical elements. Non-co-operation cannot be given up but the form of non-co-operation will have to be changed into a more militant one and the fight for freedom waged on all fronts".

During his stay in Vienna, Subhas Bose wrote a regular newsletter which The Hindu published as "a letter from Vienna". In one of these letters Subhas Bose replied to criticism in India of the joint statement. Bose said "When we say that Mahatmaji (or his present method) has failed we mean that he has failed to bring freedom to India. I consider the suspension of the movement at the present time to be a gross betrayal on the part of our leader of the trust reposed in him by the nation and as a humble member of the nation I am entitled to criticise the action of our leader. It is a greater mistake than the Bardoli blunder of 1922 and has virtually undone the suffering and sacrifice of the last 12 years. In my humble opinion the blunder began with the sidetracking of the present movement by Congressmen who took up the anti-untouchability campaign at a time when the C.D. campaign was in full swing in the country. The wrong lead given by Congressmen in this respect led the country to gradually divert the mind from the political to the non-political channel of activity. The result of this diversion of activity was the same as it would be if an army sent to fight gave up that work suddenly and took to excavating an irrigation channel". In a speech at Chicago (U.S.A.) in March 1933, Maulana Shaukat Ali, the younger of the famous Ali brothers who were the ardent co-operators of the Mahatma in the Khilafat movement of 1920, spoke of Gandhiji's two weak points which ultimately led to his breaking away from Gandhiji. "He makes

easy tasks difficult", he said. "If you are going on a straight easy road he would rather put you on a road through a furrowed field and make you walk and suffer more than you have to when you go on the easy road. Rather than have you drink water as one ordinarily does he would like people to tip the glass over and have it drop down drop by drop. The other point is very much worse for him: when the time comes for a decision to be made to get something for the people so that they may have time and leisure to devote themselves to a constructive programme and do something, he gets panicky and nervous and cannot decide. That is the reason for the misfortunes we have had for these eight years"

On the last day of Gandhiji's fast (May 28, 1933) Mrs Sarojini Naidu who watched over him gave this description of Gandhiji, to insistent request from reporters "Those who have been privileged to be by the side of Mr Gandhi during the penitential fast have witnessed from hour to hour the miracle of the spirit's victory over frail and failing flesh. His body is worn to the merest shadow, his breath is feeble, his physical strength sinks lower moment by moment before our eyes—but his smile remains as serene, his gesture as expressive, his courtesy as exquisite, his humour as latent, his mind as luminous and his will as invincible as in the days of his health. His radiant faith has never flickered for a single instant throughout the long drawn ordeal of his fast. In his presence all doubt is transformed into hope, all fear transmitted into courage and despair itself transfigured into the knowledge and certainty — that his will be the victory, not merely over bodily death, but over the deadly wrong doing for which he has in this sublime and terrible manner offered himself up as a triumphant sacrifice".

And The Hindu wrote what must be considered as a very moving editorial when Gandhiji broke the fast on May 29 "Miracles, it has been well said, are not unnatural, they only transcend our knowledge of the laws of life; their mystery is hid beyond the orbit of our imperfect vision. So while we marvel we acclaim that testimony to living, watchful and benevolent providence which comes from Poona today. The travail of 21 days (it seemed like 21 years rather as time dragged on its leaden feet) has ended and the spirit of man has achieved one more triumph against the weakness of the flesh and the world's want of faith. Gandhiji has come back to us unscathed from the valley of the shadow of death, for like the prophet of old he has walked with God. He looks upon his emergence from this fast as a spiritual re-birth; has he not said, "if God gives me a further lease of life and desires me to work more, a new epoch will begin in my life". May it not also be the herald of the nation's rebirth? It may if the nation wills it. Tomorrow millions of our countrymen will tender thanks to the merciful power that has preserved the life of one so precious to us. But our prayer will be a meaningless mumble and our praise hypocrisy if we do not take to heart the great lesson of the fast. If the country means to stand by him and by his great ideals it must cast out all rancour and uncharitableness and exorcise the demon of disunion. It must be firm of purpose, patient in pursuing it, courteous to opposition, and perfectly scrupulous in the means and the methods it employs. It must at all times hold fast by the twin principles that Gandhiji has taught and practised—ahimsa and the way of love. Harijan uplift is not going to be achieved in a day—the surest way to failure would be to overlook or underrate the obstacles that time has flung up in the path of the

reformer. What Gandhiji attempts is nothing less than a radical transformation of the psychology of a people; he would have us find our own soul again. Such a task is not to be entered upon in a light hearted or frivolous spirit or in a mood of effervescent enthusiasm, it cannot be furthered by the tactics of the hustings or the brawls of the market place''

# The Hindu Challenges Gandhiji's Policy

35

**T**HE CONFERENCE of Congress leaders convened at Poona by the acting Congress President, M. S. Aney on July 14, 1933, authorised Gandhiji to seek an unconditional interview with the Viceroy with a view to "arriving at an honourable settlement". Gandhiji's telegram to the Viceroy was taken to the Central Telegraph office by C. Rajagopalachari himself who booked it at 20 minutes past midnight. The Hindu said not only "courtesy but statesmanship requires that the Viceroy should be prepared to meet Gandhiji and discuss with him frankly and freely as man to man the issues involved". At the same time The Hindu wanted the Congress to abandon the method of civil disobedience and try "other methods" by which all progressive forces in the country could be harnessed to the cause of practical, constructive action.

On July 17 it was reported from Simla that the Viceroy had turned down Gandhiji's request for an interview since the Congress had not withdrawn the C.D. movement. The Hindu said the reasons given by the Viceroy for rejecting the request were "by no means convincing". Gandhiji sent another telegram declaring his readiness to discuss with the Viceroy the issues raised by him and he received the same negative reply.

The Hindu while deploring the "truculent attitude of the Government" appealed to the Congress to realise that C.D. "has outlived its usefulness as a method — and that is the prevailing feeling in the country". It added, "Nothing will be gained by persisting with it or rather maintaining a semblance of it when a practical and constructive programme calculated to turn the energies of the nation into channels of fruitful activity is what is urgently called for. The pre-eminence that the Congress won among Indian parties in the country was the result of its ceaseless labours in the cause of political progress uninfluenced by extraneous considerations. So long as it applies itself to the cause of the country in the same dedicated spirit its prestige will take care of itself".

In an exclusive interview to Salivatti, on July 18 Gandhiji said, "I made every effort that was humanly possible but when the door was banged in my face I became helpless. The informal conference was favourable to peace. It is difficult to say what would have been the basis of an honourable peace but it would certainly have been reinstatement, at the very least, of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in so far as it was possible for I could show that there was a breach of that pact not by the Congress but by the Government". Gandhiji said civil



disobedience would continue but it would be confined to individual effort. "Individuals will offer civil disobedience on their own responsibility".

This statement of Gandhiji evoked strong criticism from *The Hindu* which questioned his decision to carry on individual civil resistance. "The offer of civil resistance", it said, "by select individuals, however strong-willed they may be and however pure their motives is not likely to bring about a change in the status of the nation within any period of time with which alone practical politics can concern itself. On the other hand it is just likely that other methods will be found more efficient to achieve the purpose in view".

Gandhiji, his wife and secretary with 33 members of his Sabarmati Ashram were arrested in Ahmedabad on August 1, 1933, under the Special Emergency Powers Act. Some days earlier the Mahatma had disbanded his ashram and handed over the immovable property to public bodies. He had estimated the value of immovable and movable properties at about Rs. 4 lakhs. He had sent a telegram to the Bombay Government intimating them that he proposed to lead a march to Ras in Gujarat with his ashram companions. "No desire to invite the villagers to mass civil disobedience", he said in the telegram, "but individuals will be invited to offer civil disobedience in terms of the Congress resolution". The Government later said that it was on the basis of the telegram that the decision to arrest Gandhiji and his companions was taken.

But Gandhiji was released soon from Yerawada jail and served with an order to stay in Poona which he disobeyed and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. In Trichinopoly C. Rajagopalachari and 16 others who similarly defied prohibitory orders were sent to prison for six months. Gandhiji gave an ultimatum to Government that if he was not given facilities to carry on Harijan uplift work from prison as before he would go on a fast and not satisfied with the Government's response, he did go on a fast on August 16. He broke his fast on August 23 when the Government released him unconditionally.

It was now the parting of the ways for *The Hindu* with Gandhiji and in a four-column editorial on August 19 it questioned some of the assumptions of Gandhiji with regard to non-violence and the Congress. It wrote: "it is plain, however, that Mahatma Gandhi has throughout these several expositions ignored the clear distinction which he once very properly made between his own principles and faith in civil disobedience and the principles which the Congress had accepted for achieving its aims. In his statement of July 26 last he has dwelt chiefly upon his own faith in the creed of non-violence and all that flows from it and not on the policy or programme which under very specific limitations and restrictions the Congress accepted and adopted in 1920. Everyone will agree with him — and the Congress and the country will even be grateful to him in this behalf — on the message of non-violence preached by him in the darkest days of India's travail. By adopting it as "the right route to our goal" in 1920 the country has gained in political stature, momentum and power; we see the evidence of it in the mass consciousness of national self-respect that has made itself felt both by our rulers and by the world at large. But neither the country as a whole nor many leading Congressmen will agree with the views which Gandhiji has put forward of the tenet of non-violence and its scope in practical application or with his implied contention that the country as a whole has actually adopted them or that the Congress committed itself to these views for all time. That the spirit of non-violence

should spread throughout the world and Satyagraha should be the basis of the future ordering of the world is what idealists may always hope for. But that India should wait for her freedom until the spirit of non-violence permeates every human being in India in the manner in which Mahatma Gandhi wants it should, so that the rest of the world may follow India's example and do likewise, is a different proposition. It cannot, at any rate, be contended, that the Congress has been irrevocably committed to it. Such a contention would amount to a claim to have changed what has all along been an essentially national political organisation for the achievement of political freedom, as it is ordinarily understood, into an organisation for the achievement of a spiritual or a religious ideal. It can hardly appeal to those politically minded Congressmen who still feel that mankind will have to travel a long, long way before such a lofty goal could be realised. None was better aware of this than Mahatma Gandhi himself in 1920 when he appealed to the Congress to adopt it as a policy in the then conditions of India. In accepting his lead in 1920, the Congress did nothing more than accept non-violence, very properly, as the basis of the programme of triple boycott and also of its prospective plan of a no tax and civil disobedience campaign. Successive resolutions of the Congress have not gone further than the resolution from which Mahatma Gandhi now seems to conclude that the Congress attitude to non-violence is identical with his own. We think that the Congress did not either in 1920 or subsequently take any such irrevocable step with its incalculable consequences. It seems to us therefore difficult to contend, either on general principles or with reference to the actual events connected with the movement since 1920 that Congress is committed to the continuation of civil disobedience so long as a single civil resister is available, that every civil resister who goes to jail on the basis assumed by Mahatma Gandhi or even on more restricted grounds, would "be acting on behalf of and in the name of the Congress because in this view Purna Swaraj or substantial swaraj or whatever it may be, has not been and will not be achieved until the entire country becomes non-violent in thought, word and deed. On the other hand it is clear that the Congress adopted the programme of boycott and C.D. entirely as a political weapon for the achievement of what are essentially political ends, namely, the attainment of full self-Government call it independence, substance of independence or full Dominion Status under the Statute of Westminster or by any other name you like — in such a manner that the country as a whole would deem it to be a satisfactory settlement of its political future. . . . Mahatma Gandhi and other Congressmen have agreed that the C.D. movement should be called off and this in our view imposes on all Congressmen who do not propose to participate in C.D. a clear duty towards the Congress. Without in any way surrendering their opinion or faith in the principle of C.D. as they understand it, they should have no hesitation in declaring that as a programme of organised mass action C.D. should now be given up and on that footing they should proceed to restore the Congress to its position of primacy among the political instruments that half a century of nation building has evolved for achieving the goal of the country's political ambitions. The Congress has come to occupy a unique place in the affections of the people because it has symbolised the will to be free, the resolve to work for that freedom by all legitimate and constructive political methods and the alert and resolute opposition to all attempts to

encroach on the just rights and liberties of the citizen from whatever quarter they might originate. Only by restoring the Congress to the position in which it can discharge its primary functions will they be able to strengthen and organise it for the great political and social tasks ahead"

Far away in Vienna, Vithalbhai J. Patel, former President of the Central Assembly who was in his last days and pining for the freedom of his motherland, thought like *The Hindu*. In an interview from his death bed to its Prague Correspondent he said his mind was occupied with Indian affairs. He was anxious to return home as early as possible. He considered C.D. on the ideology on which it was started and run should be withdrawn. He had no faith 'in converting the British Government or winning it by love. He was strongly for contesting the new elections and council entry. The Correspondent noted that Mr. Patel depended much for his information on India on the daily edition of *The Hindu*. Patel died a few days later on October 22, 1933.

Gandhiji arrived in Madras on December 20, 1933 in the course of his Harijan tour of the south beginning with Andhra Pradesh. Before leaving for Guntur on December 23, the Mahatma was examined by Dr. S. Rangachari and *The Hindu* announced. "After a thorough examination, our readers will be glad to know he has pronounced his opinion that Gandhiji's health is quite satisfactory." Gandhiji's dependence on *The Hindu* for the daily news during his tour of South was highlighted by the Calicut Correspondent who covered the Mahatma's visit to Malabar in January, 1934. He reported that one evening finding that he had not received a copy of *The Hindu* dated January 13, Gandhiji made enquiries where he could get a copy of that date. He was told there was no issue of the paper on that date due to a holiday for Pongal and given the issue dated January 14 which he then perused avidly.

As the great earthquake devastated Bihar in January, 1934, killing thousands of people, and bringing ruin and misery to hundreds of towns and villages, *The Hindu* started a relief fund for the victims of the earthquake in response to Babu Rajendra Prasad's appeal. Talking to the Calcutta Correspondent, M. S. M. Sarma, on the phone, Rajendra Prasad asked if *The Hindu* was giving all particulars about the Bihar quake havoc and when the Correspondent said 'Yes', Rajendra Prasad remarked: "Then it's all right, Mahatmaji will be in touch with Bihar in that case."

It was during a speech at Tirunelveli on January 24 that Gandhiji made a statement with regard to the Bihar earthquake which was to prove highly controversial. Gandhiji said the Bihar earthquake was a divine "chastisement, deserved by us, for our sins. Even to avowed sufferers it must be clear that nothing but divine will can explain such a calamity of this magnitude. I can only say to you that all of us must strive to alleviate the misery caused by the earthquake as much as possible."

M. S. M. Sarma, who was deputed to visit the devastated areas of Bihar sent graphic reports of the loss of life, damage and the hardships to the survivors from the many towns and villages he visited and after returning to his base in Calcutta he wrote "I have just concluded my visit to the areas affected by the recent earthquake in Bihar. Bihar is today enveloped in gloom and misery. Starvation and death stare her in the face. To have a clear idea of the unfortunate state of things in Bihar, let readers in Madras imagine for themselves an area as big as the portion of the presidency from Madras right down

to Trichinopoly; then again an area as big in extent as that between Madras city and Bangalore and a third area as large as that between Jalarpet and Olavakot. The first and third areas have been completely wiped out and certain portions thereof are still inaccessible except by aeroplane. All the people in these areas have been rendered homeless. The second area is partially damaged. In all these areas poverty and misery reign supreme."

Gandhiji approved the revival of the Swaraj Party and the contesting of the Assembly elections when a deputation of Congress leaders headed by Dr. M. A. Ansari and including Dr. B. C. Roy and Bhulabhai Desai met him at Patna in April 1934 and informed him of the decisions taken by the conference of Congress leaders in Delhi early in the month. Gandhiji in a letter to Dr. Ansari said: "I have no hesitation in welcoming the revival of the Swaraj party and the decision of the meeting to take part in the forthcoming elections to the Assembly which you tell me is about to be dissolved. My views on the utility of legislatures in the present state are well known. They remain on the whole what they were in 1920, but I feel that it is not only right but it is the duty of every Congressman who for some reason or other does not want to or cannot take part in civil resistance and who has faith in entry into legislatures to seek entry and form combinations in order to prosecute the programme which he or they believe to be in the interests of the country".

The Hindu hailed Gandhiji's statement with "supreme satisfaction" and said that the widespread welcome given to the Delhi decisions showed "how keenly the country desires that the Congress and Congressmen should again take their rightful place in the fight for freedom". The Hindu at the same time pleaded for the revocation of the Poona resolution regarding individual civil resistance since the formal abandonment of it "should secure for the new political movement the services of well tried and trusted leaders and make it the prelude to the achievement of abiding national unity".

The Hindu added: "The re-orientation of Congress policy which is now practically accomplished, offers the Government yet another opportunity of putting themselves right with Indian opinion and paving the way for a new era of co-operation".

In another move, which had been long urged by The Hindu, Gandhiji suspended individual civil resistance on April 7. "It should be resumed by others", he said in Patna, "in my lifetime only under my direction unless one arises claiming to know the science better than I do". The Hindu appealed to all sections of Congress opinion "to bury the controversies of the past few months and to take counsel together as to how best the true interests of the nation may be served".

In an interview to M. S. M. Sarma, the Hindu Special Correspondent at Patna, Gandhiji explained his decision. "My only aim", he said, "in coming to this decision was to purge the movement of any possibility of internal decay. Such a possibility must always be there when an imperfect man handles imperfect instruments. I therefore felt that the time had come for me to reduce the possibility of decay to the minimum. That could only be secured if civil resistance was confined to one person only, that one being the most versed in the science. In my opinion the decision will make the movement stronger than before and capable of being easily handled both by the people and by the Government".

As the Swaraj party leaders were due to meet in Patna and a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was being convened, Correspondents were busy speculating if the Central Assembly would be dissolved or its life extended. The Hindu's Delhi Correspondent had reported that Whitehall had prevailed upon the Government of India to reconsider its decision to dissolve the Assembly since the Swarajists' first action in the new Assembly might be to throw out the White Paper. It was officially stated in Delhi that no decision had been taken and The Hindu hoped that wiser counsels would still prevail and the Assembly would be dissolved.

The Allahabad Correspondent reported, "There is a real tug-of-war between Whitehall and Delhi on the question of the dissolution of the Assembly. It seems that while the Viceroy backed by a majority of the Executive Council demands dissolution partly because of the demoralisation of the present Assembly and partly because of the trend of Congress politics, the Secretary of State for India and his colleagues apprehend that the Swarajists on capturing the Assembly would tear the white paper scheme to shreds and create an embarrassing and highly critical situation."

All speculation was set at rest when the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, announced the dissolution of the Assembly on May 11, 1934. The Simla Correspondent reporting the decision said: "It would appear the Government of India took a bold decision and it is stated that they were prepared to face the risk of a public challenge to the white paper proposals by the Swarajists, rather than to give way to the fears expressed by the diehard group of politicians in England over the white paper issue."

The Swarajist party was formed in Ranchi on May 2 at a meeting of Congressmen. The Hindu advised them that they should "Not merely content themselves with crystallising the general opinion that the white paper proposals are unsatisfactory. They should put forward their own concrete proposals not waiting for a constituent assembly to do this, since such an Assembly is better summoned to give its solemn sanction in the name of the country to a constitutional scheme which has been elaborated and perfected by a smaller and more businesslike body". The Hindu added: "Since ultimately that view must prevail which is able to secure the maximum of public support, it is to be hoped that the Swarajists will in defining their attitude towards the constitutional question realise the need for facilitating the purposeful co-operation of all parties so as to arm the national demand with the entire strength of the nation".

The All India Congress Committee which met at Patna on May 20 decided to set up a Congress election board to contest the elections and thus in the words of Gandhiji "absorbed" the Swarajist party within itself. The Hindu thought the development "cannot but have extraordinary repercussions both in the country itself and in England. What even the unparalleled influence of the late Deshabandu (C. R. Das) and Pandit Motilal with Gandhiji personally and in the counsels of the Congress itself was unable to achieve 10 years ago has been achieved today. The leaders of the Swaraj Party may well be proud of the fact. The Patna decision is, at the same time, striking proof that the Congress leadership is abundantly possessed of that realism which its detractors have denied it."

The Government's reaction to the changed policy of the Congress was in the words of *The Hindu*, revealed by their "shortsighted and illiberal outlook" They announced the lifting of the ban on Congress organisations but declared that the special laws proclaimed to meet the C D movement would remain. Release of C D prisoners would continue to be expedited. *The Hindu* said that the "reservations, general and specific, that hedged in their (Government's) response to the changed policy of the Congress are so unnecessary and so thoroughly imbued with a spirit of suspicion and distrust that they are bound to rob the response of much of its value"

In September 1934, *The Hindu* got into trouble with Gandhiji. On the fourth of that month it published a message telephoned to it by its Wardha Correspondent which said "It is reliably learnt that Mahatma Gandhi has decided to withdraw from active leadership of the Indian National Congress. This decision will be announced at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee in Wardha on September 8. The decision, it is understood, is due to differences with Pandit Malaviya and others"

On September 5, Gandhiji issued a statement through the Associated Press of India in which he said. "I am surprised that a responsible paper like *The Hindu* should have published without reference to me, unauthorised news about a serious decision said to have been made by me. Surely, the Wardha Correspondent could have had the news confirmed or denied. It was wrong to disclose incomplete and unauthorised reports of confidential conversation. I may say that there have been discussions with co-workers in the matter but no final decision has been taken". Gandhiji added: "Whatever the decision that may be arrived at it has and will have no connection whatsoever with Malaviya and Mr. Aney".

The Editor of *The Hindu* in a footnote to the message said. "We regret that currency should have been given to the report which Gandhiji's statement shows to be baseless that his intention to withdraw from active leadership was due to differences with Pandit Malaviya and Mr. Aney. We gladly publish the correction. It will be seen that our Correspondent's report is not contradicted in other important aspects by Gandhiji's statement or by the further messages that appear today. We need hardly add that *The Hindu* acted with a sense of its responsibility as a responsible newspaper in giving publicity to information of first class importance to the public derived from sources which it has always found reliable"

The differences with Pandit Malaviya and M. S. Aney, which led to the formation of the Nationalist Party later, arose because the Congress Working Committee said it would adopt an attitude of neutrality on the Communal Award while criticising it. Pandit Malaviya and Aney announced they and their party would contest the Assembly elections on the issue of condemning the white paper and rejecting the Communal Award.

On September 12, 1934, the Wardha Correspondent said that Gandhiji would not retire from the Congress till the Bombay session of the Congress was over. He added that the unanimous appeal of his Congress colleagues had impressed him to some extent though he had strong views on the subject.

In a statement from Wardha a few days later Gandhiji admitted that the "rumour that I had contemplated severing all physical connections with the Congress was true. However for considerations urged by many friends who

had come to Wardha during the meeting of the Working Committee and Parliamentary Board, I agreed with them that it might be safer for me to leave the Congress, if at all, after the forthcoming session. There was an intermediate course suggested by Pandit Gobind Ballabh Pant and Mr Rafi Ahmed Kidwai of remaining in the Congress without participating in the active administration of the organisation. But both Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Maulana Azad strongly disapproved of that course. Sardar Vallabhbhai had agreed with me that the time had arrived for me to retire from the Congress but many others would not endorse that view. After due consideration of all the pros and cons I have adopted the safe and prudent course of postponing the final step at least after the meeting of the Congress session in October".

Gandhiji in his long statement gave reasons for his decision to retire and among them were his feeling that the intellectuals did not fully subscribe to his programme, including loyalty to Khadi and the spinning wheel, their opposition to his switching on to the Harijan campaign, the emergence of the socialists, lack of faith in non-violence as a creed and lastly the prevalence of corruption. He said he would test the sincerity of Congressmen at the forthcoming session by proposing certain resolutions on the points he had raised.

The Hindu while noting that Gandhiji "holds the great national organisation in such high esteem that he is jealous of its fair name and anxious that it should not fall short of the highest ideal", said "In his desire to purge it of undesirable practices and to make it an efficient instrument for the attainment of national ends, he is entitled to the sympathy and co-operation of every true lover of his country. But the question will naturally be asked whether the concrete proposals Gandhiji puts forward in this behalf are all calculated to enhance the power and prestige of the Congress as a political organisation. For it must be remembered that the Congress has always been regarded primarily as a political body of workers for the achievement of self-Government. The unique position it occupies in the affections of the people is due to the great and solid work it has done as a political body — in awakening the masses to a consciousness of their just rights and infusing them with the energy necessary to make a stand for those rights. In varying its programme, method, and strategy from time to time, in the light of changing conditions, it has merely obeyed the adaptive instinct which guides political organisms. In order that it may continue the work upon which it has been engaged for half a century and put the coping stone on that colossal work as early as possible it seems to us imperative that it should preserve intact its essentially political character. But if the changes that Gandhiji proposes are adopted and the philosophy underlying them should become the mainspring of the Congress activity, the Congress would cease to be a political body. Gandhiji argues that while he has always held that the 'means and the end are convertible terms, many Congressmen do not admit this (to me) obvious truth'. He is scarcely justified in thinking that those who differ from him 'believe that the end justifies the means whatever they may be'. They hold that while the end is one the means may be many and which of them should be employed at a particular juncture should depend upon pragmatic considerations of utility, practicability, and the greatest good. A great political organisation which claims to speak for the whole country must not expect the numerous, varied, and variously developed elements it represents, to satisfy arbitrary tests as a condition of its

functioning. To do so would be to violate its natural function. Man with all his imperfections and limitations cannot be converted into an angel overnight however intensive may be his education. The ascent towards the goal is a matter of infinite toil and endless pain punctuated by many failures and backslidings. The steep narrow and thorny path of spiritual endeavour is for the heroic few. The mass of mankind must be content with working for a clearly visualised if limited end, and those who lead it must take into account limitations and imperfections, which viewed rightly, themselves supply the incentive to an earnest effort to overcome them. It seems to us that the Khadi franchise and other rigid tests that Gandhiji proposes will, if they are not evaded, be founded greatly to hinder the task of mobilising and making dynamic the energies of the nation to which the Congress must address itself at this juncture. Gandhiji's views on democracy again have implications which must be carefully considered before the country commits itself to an attitude that would be difficult to reconcile with the basic conceptions of that representative democracy which it has for good or evil set to achieve".

Gandhiji in his statement referring to Congress intelligentsia had said: "It has appeared to me that there is growing and vital difference of outlook between many Congressmen and myself. I seem to be going in a direction just the opposite of what many of the most intellectual Congressmen would gladly and enthusiastically take, if they were not hampered by their unexampled loyalty to me. No leader can expect greater loyalty and devotion than I have received from intellectually-minded Congressmen even when they have protested and signified their disapproval of the policies I have laid before the Congress. For me any more to draw upon this loyalty and devotion is to put an undue strain upon them. Their loyalty cannot blind my eyes to what appears to me to be fundamental differences between the Congress intelligentsia and me".

The amendments Gandhiji wanted in the Congress constitution were (1) Congress creed to be changed from "legitimate and peaceful" to "truthful and non-violent"; (2) replace the four anna membership fee with 2000 rounds of Khadi yarn to be delivered by each member every month spun by himself; (3) habitual wearing of Khadi an essential qualification for membership.

Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer commenting on Gandhiji's statement said: "It sounds very much like the swan song of a dying dictator. It is the tragedy of a great soul reeling from its mistakes and imperfections, weighed down by a sense of responsibility for the undesirable, unintended consequences of its fateful decisions and resolved to drink its cup of sorrow and disillusionment to the dregs".

V. S. Srinivasa Sastri said: "The Congress is not meant for saints and sages. It is meant for the common man and woman". He said the stipulation of Khadi spinning for membership would "promote hypocrisy". "Why should men who wanted to win Independence be compelled to seek that end by turning the charka?" he asked. The more he thought over the spinning franchise, Sastri said, the more he was convinced that there was something mystic in it. He thought Gandhiji's proposals amounted to closing the doors of the great political organisation against thousands of thinking men, honest and sincere patriots, by inventing all sorts of fantastic tests.



Gandhiji told the Subjects Committee of the Bombay session of the Congress on October 23, 1934 of his decision to retire "The majority of the Working Committee was in favour of my retirement", he said, "and a strong minority was against it but I must not be brought down by force even if it is the force of love I feel that I am a deadweight pressing on the Congress".

The Hindu said "It looks as if the country will have to reconcile itself to the inevitable And in the peculiar circumstances in which the country is placed at present, this decision of his is perhaps for the best".

The Subjects Committee decided to refer the proposal to change the Congress creed into "truth and non-violence" to provincial committees for eliciting opinion

Reviewing the Congress session in Bombay, The Hindu said its outstanding feature was its "explicit recognition that the Congress is primarily a political organisation and must leave no method untried which is not inconsistent with its creed and which has been approved by the political wisdom of ages".

In the next few days The Hindu carried on a campaign in favour of Congress candidates in the elections to the Central Assembly "Only a legislature in which the premier national organisation has a predominant voice can speak with the authority that compels respect and secures the just rights of the people", it said The Hindu said the issue before the people was "whether they approve of the so called dual policy as it has been worked out in actual practice or whether they support the great organisation which has by its unrivalled record of service and sacrifice demonstrated its unique capacity to interpret the will of the people and its resolve to enforce it"

In the course of the vigorous election campaign in Madras city Sir A Ramaswami Mudaliar who was opposing S. Satyamurthi (Congress) had an advertisement published in The Hindu in which under the heading "Sir Tej Bahadur's appeal", he reproduced a letter written to him by Sapru praising his work at the R T C and hoping his talents may be available to the Indian legislature at this juncture. On the opposite page was published a story from the paper's Allahabad Correspondent which said that Sapru had not intended his letter to be used in the election controversy and he did not know who Mudaliar's opponent was He added, "The testimonial is only a refutation of the allegation that Mr Mudaliar was a reactionary but has no bearing on the relative merits of candidates or the issues involved in the election campaign "

Satyamurthi of course won over Ramaswami Mudaliar by a majority of 5000 votes The Congress victory in Madras was so complete that The Hindu was emboldened to remark: "It may be predicted without undue optimism that the country will declare itself unmistakably in favour of the Congress". The Hindu's faith was not misplaced The Congress emerged as the largest single party in the Assembly in the elections

But meanwhile another development had occurred, the publication of the report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on constitutional reforms and its contents were so bad and reactionary that Indian opinion almost unanimously rejected it. In a five-column bitter denunciation of the Report, The Hindu called it an "intensely reactionary document". It added: "The committee reveal in every sentence of their report a blatant disregard of Indian opinion and their conclusions can have no pretensions to being based on agreement with India's leaders". The paper said the Federation which the

Committee proposed would be put through an "obstacle race from which if it emerges at all, it will emerge exhausted, fissiparous tendencies, having meanwhile a free field and making the most of it. The kind of responsibility at the Centre they propose will be even more illusory than what the White Paper envisaged and the 'safeguards' are so many, comprehensive and rigid that they must vastly discount such little responsibility as is formally to be conferred". The Hindu said. "It is proposed to place India vis-a-vis Britain in a permanently subordinate position economically by imposing on her legal disabilities ostensibly to prevent commercial discrimination which may really have the effect of paralysing the economic and industrial regeneration of the country which is now in its infant stages. The Committee have taken the Simon Report for their bible from which they differ in regard to but a few points". The Hindu concluded: "Indian leaders cannot fail to see that our disunion has been the opportunity of British reactionaries and the Government have chosen to follow the line of least resistance forgetful of reiterated pledges. Only a determined national front can retrieve the situation and no time should be lost in organising it".

Opinions on the report flooded the columns of *The Hindu* in the days that followed and among them was that of M. A. Jinnah who said in London: "The principal aim of the scheme is how best to maintain British supremacy and paramountcy and not grant a real measure of self-government to India. The result would be that it would strengthen all the more extremist opinion in India and almost destroy the rational, progressive, national elements as they will not succeed in rallying public opinion to work the central constitution as outlined. I realise India has lost her place and status as a party capable of negotiating and forcing her will upon Parliament so long as we cannot put up a united front and present a definite alternative constitution".

The Congress Working Committee rejected the scheme at Patna on December 6, 1934, "well knowing that rejection must involve the necessity of struggling under the present constitution, humiliating and intolerable as it is, until it is replaced by one framed by the constituent assembly in accordance with the Congress resolution on the subject".

The Hindu noted that the Committee's resolution "reveals a confident faith that unity can be achieved and must be achieved if India is to have Swaraj. If the examination of the Joint Select Committee scheme offers an opportunity for exploring the foundations of such unity, should the Congress refuse to avail itself of it?".

The Indian Liberals (as represented by the National Liberal Federation) at their session in Poona rejected the scheme on the ground that the "responsible Government contemplated in the report is wholly illusory and that the new constitution will far from allaying very much intensify the present deep political discontent in the country".

Srinivasa Sastri speaking on the resolution said: "We may be chronic co-operators but I do not think we shall go thus far". The Hindu said the next step to which all progressive parties should address themselves is to determine "how this unanimity should issue in action that would vindicate national self-respect and secure the abiding interests of the country".

The newly elected Central Assembly in which (as already indicated) Congressmen led by Bhulabhai Desai formed the largest bloc, expressed its views

on the J S C Report on February 8, 1935, by carrying Mr Jinnah's amendment to the Government's motion. The amendment declared that the scheme was "bad and totally unacceptable". The Hindu said "It is the Assembly's deliberate verdict that this imposed settlement is unacceptable to India and Great Britain will be undertaking a grave responsibility in ignoring that verdict".

With his retirement from the Congress Gandhiji went out of the pages of newspapers. No news about him appeared in *The Hindu* in February or March 1935 except an item which said that he had been refused permission to visit the North-West Frontier Province. And on March 22 Mahadev Desai announced from Wardha that Gandhiji had decided to observe silence for four weeks from March 22 "in order to clear arrears of correspondence and revision of an important manuscript which has been awaiting disposal for months".

As the House of Commons adopted the India reforms bill in June 1935, *The Hindu* wrote "Few dispassionate observers will deny that this bill is characterised by extraordinary suspicion and distrust of the progressive nationalist elements in India. The Secretary of State appealed to Indians to see that there is a period of political calm in India in which the bill can be brought into operation with the best possible hopes of success. Not only has the bill been so framed as to militate against the establishment of such a calm and favourable atmosphere, the administrative policy that the Government in India has been pursuing even after the suspension of the C D movement has not been calculated to conciliate public opinion or open the way to co-operation. Britain today is not in a mood to ponder over the profound truth of Mr Lansbury's saying, 'we do not believe you can settle the Indian question by the imposition of a constitution without consultation and consent'. But the logic of circumstances will compel her to recognise it and that much sooner than those present at the helm of her affairs imagine".

The last word on the matter was said when the Royal Assent was given to the Bill on August 2, 1935 and it became law. *The Hindu* in a four-column leader pointed out that the assurance of full responsible Government at the Centre given by the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, at the R.T.C. had been given the go-by in the new Act and added "The new constitution is exclusively the handiwork of the Tories alike in the inspiration and in the actual shaping and if a measure of its unacceptability even to enlightened British opinion is required, it will be found in the official declaration issued by the Prime Minister at the end of the first R.T.C. That declaration spoke not of a measure of responsibility at the Centre but 'of responsibility for the Government of India being placed upon the legislatures, central and provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities'. It will be clear that the British Government at that time envisaged for India a constitution in no essentials different from those enjoyed by the self-governing Dominions, though requiring certain temporary and self-eliminating restrictions in view of historical causes. Whereas India had asked for and been promised the status and substance of self-government which the Dominions enjoy, the new constitution is admittedly based on the theory of permanent partnership between Britain and India in the ordering of India's affairs, India occupying the role of junior partner for all time. This notion of perpetual tutelage permeates the

constitutional proposals through and through. The fundamental fact on which the new constitution is bound to crash is that there is no half way house to self-government. No arrangement can be permanent which does not give the people it will intimately affect that deep seated satisfaction on the one hand, which comes with real freedom, and on the other the opportunity to develop to the fullest extent in the social and economic spheres. No amount of sophistication will convince Indians that this bill is even the penultimate step towards real self-government. No constitution that is framed without regard to the wishes, and that does not harness the active goodwill of the people for whom it is intended can work to anyone's satisfaction. Even in the most favourable atmosphere of co-operation it would be a superhuman task to make a success of this scheme. For it unduly exalts the executive by vesting in the irresponsible and irremovable head of that executive innumerable and autocratic powers; it makes the Central Legislature a constant prey to contending provincial factions and removes from its purview and control all major problems vitally affecting national self-reliance and integrity, it saddles the provinces with unwanted second chambers and makes illusory the people's control over such vital matters as finance and railways; and above all it sets up a system of Government at the Centre which puts obstacles in the way of emergence of 'a completely united Indian polity' which indeed the Joint Committee said, 'cannot be established either now or so far as human foresight can extend, at any time'."

The Hindu said: "All the restrictions that human ingenuity can devise are however powerless against the puissant forces that a nation determined to be free can generate. As the Government in what they imagine to be their strength, have resolved to do their will by India, irrespective of the latter's wishes, India cannot be blamed if she utilises all opportunities to achieve her ambition, no longer pinning her faith to British promises which have proved notoriously unreliable or to the way of compromise and co-operation which Britain has wilfully disregarded. Such a development will certainly not be conducive to the promotion of better relations between the two countries, but the responsibility therefor would be entirely that of Britain's present rulers".

**A.** RANGASWAMI IYENGAR, Editor of The Hindu since 1928, passed away on February 4, 1934, after a stewardship of the paper for six fruitful momentous years. By modern standards he died young, he was only 57. He died on a Sunday and since the paper closed down as a mark of respect to his memory the outside world read the news only the following Tuesday. There were funeral orations at the cremation ground led by S. Satyamurthi who spoke of Rangaswami Iyengar's work in the Assembly as the Secretary of the Swarajya Party. "If the Government of India was terror-stricken in the Assembly in those days by the thundering tones of Pandit Motilal Nehru, the brain which provided ideas and organised the whole party was Rangaswami Iyengar. If today The Hindu whose magnificent edifice Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar built up, Mr. S. Rangaswami carried on, and to which Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar brought his great gifts of training under Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar, is a powerful organ constructively shaping public opinion and making the Government care for what The Hindu says from day to day and the people follow its lead, not a little is due to Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar's powerful gifts as a born editor".

In a three-column leader under the heading "A great son of India", The Hindu paid its homage to its late Editor. It described Rangaswami Iyengar as "one of India's greatest sons and one of her foremost nationalists" and said: "The Hindu makes its appearance today under the shadow of a great bereavement—one which has deprived it of the services of an Editor who carried on with distinction the high traditions created for it by a succession of illustrious Editors. Great opportunities for service came to Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar and he acquitted himself greatly. But he had also more than the usual share of sorrow and travail; a brilliant son who was as the apple of his eye, died in the full vigour of manhood, struck down by tuberculosis; early in life there fell upon him a monetary loss that well-nigh crippled him for life, a loss brought about by the ardent desire for public service, which was later to be crowned by such rich achievement; and a naturally delicate constitution, taxed by the arduous conditions of public life, and the sedentary habits which life at the desk habituates one, was at all times a drag on his health and spirits. His only recreation was music of which he was a well-known connoisseur, but he had little liking for the later day developments that in his opinion spoiled the purity and beauty of the art as it is currently expounded and he sought less and less

relaxation in it. He had ever a sunny smile and a friendly word for all who came to him for help and advice and none went away but felt comforted or fortified. Abstemious in his habits and with little ambition except in the country's cause his generous impulses responded readily — a little too readily as those who were intimately associated with him might have felt at times — to the constant calls that were being made upon his kindness. Like his great uncle, the late Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar, he liked to encourage talent wherever he saw it, and in his desire to conscript such talent for the service of the country he had a missionary fervour. To the last loyalty to the Congress was a dominant factor in Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar's life. This loyalty was reinforced by the conviction that the organisation which commanded the allegiance of the largest and most powerful body of public opinion in the country was, of right, entitled to have a predominant voice in the shaping of her destinies. But while he felt this and urged it day in and day out with the whole force of his personality, as the reason why the Government should seek not to 'belittle' the Congress but persuade it into honourable co-operation if a definitive and amicable settlement was ever to be reached, he was also realist enough to prefer, without ever losing sight of his objective, the more practicable method of achieving it. An ardent admirer of Gandhiji's saintly life, he realised to the full the nature and significance of the revolution that the Mahatma had effected in the thoughts of men and their ways of life, he paid his heart-felt homage to the heroic suffering and sacrifices by which the common people testified to their faith in the great Liberator. But he never disguised either from him or from others the fact that he had his own differences with Gandhiji."

The Hindu spoke of the friendship between Rangaswami Iyengar and Pandit Motilal Nehru and compared it to that between Ranade and the younger Gokhale. It said "Panditji was attracted by the alertness of mind, the constructive practicability, the amazing industry, and the thorough grasp of constitutional history and theory and practice of financial questions which Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar brought to a partnership which was responsible for some of the most brilliant achievements of the Swarajya Party in the Assembly. If Mr. C. R. Das was the prophet who foresaw the need for a new orientation in Indian politics, Pandit Motilal the statesman who by his sagacity and drive organised it for victory, and Vithalbhai Patel, the stormy petrel who was the spearhead of its inward thrust, it is not too much to say that Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar supplied the sustained intellectual effort and the patience that are required to build up a great party."

Referring to Rangaswami's role as a journalist and Editor, The Hindu said "To the Hindu which he helped build up and which for the past six years he directed with unrivalled authority, tact and foresight, his loss is too deep to be adequately expressed. His thorough grasp of constitutional and financial questions enabled him to give a wise and effective lead to public opinion in a sphere which is *terra incognita* to most and in which a false step would be fraught with the most serious consequences to the country's interests. He inspired confidence alike in the public mind and in his fellow workers even in circles which did not hold with his policies, his sincerity, honesty of purpose and desire to be scrupulously fair were recognised and what he said was invariably listened to with respect. In the troublous days ahead the country

will miss in him a wise counsellor and able servant, his friends — and they were innumerable — a genial and kindly spirit, his colleagues a leader of quenchless enthusiasm and inexhaustible patience and the world a great gentleman”

Gandhiji for whom he acted as Secretary at the London Round Table Conference and with whom he moved on intimate terms as Secretary of the National Congress and also as an Editor, said at Coonoor where he heard the news of his death “I had the privilege to enjoy close friendship with him. He was the righthand man of Pandit Motilal Nehru. His counsels were valued in Congress circles. He was one of the soberest among journalists. He upheld the traditions left by Mr. Kasturiranga lyengar, traditions which have given the influence which *The Hindu* has today”.

C. R. Srinivasan, who succeeded him as Editor of the *Swadeshamitran* and was a close associate of Rangaswami lyengar wrote. “His affable temperament, genial manners, keen humour, and ready wit made it a privilege to talk to him and a pleasure even to disagree with him. He was an easy master to serve and easier yet to please. His sense of fair play and equity was so magnanimously conceived that more often than not he was found seeking extenuating circumstances for lapses of his employees which the average employer would not tolerate. In a word service lost its sting where he was the master and those who served him brought to their task a measure of enthusiasm and energy which served to lighten considerably the burden he was carrying”

The noted writer S. V. V. highlighted another aspect of Rangaswami lyengar's character. He pointed to the quality of moderation and use of sober language by Rangaswami lyengar which made some people say “Why won't *The Hindu* make its leaders a little more lively?” “And I have found”, S. V. V. said, “that there were people whose ideas of liveness in a leader lay in interspersing an abuse or two or use of strong language in criticising Governmental measures. Mild language, however, direct or uncompromising in import, was with them a betrayal of timidity. ‘Unjust’ and ‘damned unjust’ mean the same thing so far as a statement of fact goes but some people would never consider their anger properly let off, except through the use of the latter phraseology and perhaps added to it words like “scandalous” or “disgraceful”. But Mr. lyengar well knew that anger by itself defeated its own purpose, especially in political warfare and flourishes of the limb or words of bravado, however spectacular in a ring never served the same purpose as a practical hard and concrete hit on the nose. Mr. lyengar never flourished his limbs nor cried words of bravado but simply hit. It were an indifferent type of journalism that depended upon immoderation of language for an expression of journalistic courage. It was unsuited to his sportsmanship, his high level of journalistic standard and it ill accorded with the high traditions, standard and dignity of a pioneer paper like *The Hindu*”.

Subhas Bose in a message from Vienna recalled that Rangaswami lyengar had taken the trouble of coming all the way from London to Vienna to look up V. J. Patel and himself, when they were ill. How few would do this, he asked. He also recalled lyengar's efforts when Bose was seriously ill in prison in 1932 to leave no stone unturned to make the Government take a more human attitude to him. “And for the small mercy which I ultimately received from the Government in the shape of permission to exile myself from India for the

benefit of my health, Mr A. R. Iyengar was one of the friends to whom I should remain thankful"

An admirer of Rangaswami Iyengar wrote "The gift of political insight that he was blessed with made *The Hindu* the truest vehicle of political thought in India during his time. I have heard it said that the greatest in the land were more eager to read in his days the leaders than the cables appearing in the paper. Views before news was made popular by him entirely by the political genius he displayed in the handling of complex issues affecting national welfare. On occasions he would take or commend a line of action that might seem unpopular for the time being but the nation stood to thank him and *The Hindu* later for it"

Eldest son of Narasimha Iyengar, a land-holder in Thanjavur District who had married Kasturiranga Iyengar's sister, Rangaswami began life as a clerk in the Madras Secretariat but soon qualified himself for the legal profession and set up practice in Thanjavur. As we have already seen Kasturiranga called him to Madras to help him when he acquired *The Hindu* in 1905. His secretariat training and knowledge of law gave him the right equipment for his new job, his early penchant for constitutional law and comparative history found full and free scope. He brought to his task a reserve of abounding enthusiasm and unflagging energy which was not to be denied a fruitful outlet. He was both Manager and Assistant Editor. His sympathy for the underdog, his charity extending even to the undeserving, his faith in humanity which survived all exploitation, these were qualities of enduring value. He wrote a book on the "Origin and development of the Indian constitution" which was recognised as an authoritative exposition on the subject and gave him a standing which would not normally have come to him so soon otherwise. "The race of politicians had not come into existence then", as one writer said, "and politics was yet a pastime of the spare hour and there were many who would fain spare themselves the labour of thinking".

He left *The Hindu* in 1915 to try his hand at language journalism, as Editor of *The Swadeshamitran* which had been offered to him by G. Subramania Aiyer, the founder. He built up the reputation of the paper and it did not take long for readers of *Swadeshamitran* to realise that a new force, potent and pervasive had invaded the placid atmosphere of vernacular journalism. He was that rare thing an able politician as well as an able journalist. He plunged into the politics of the Home Rule Movement. He was a good platform speaker and had the additional advantage of being able to speak both in English and Tamil. He was the General Secretary of the Home Rule League in its most active period and was a familiar and respected figure at every political gathering, big or small, cultured or common. He was invited to England as a member of the Congress deputation when the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were on the anvil. He was a man of all India reputation and one of the few leaders respected by Government and the people alike.

After the death of S. Rangaswami in 1926, K. Srinivasan had been shouldering the burden of both the Editorship and the management which he found heavy and when he invited Rangaswami Iyengar to come back to *The Hindu* and take over the Editorship, Rangaswami Iyengar could not say 'no' and he was back at the helm of *The Hindu* in 1928. After he took over he reduced his



political and other activities to the extent possible to concentrate on the editorial affairs of The Hindu

He stood for the highest principles of journalism; he was fair to opponents, fearless in attack, independent in judgment, withal constructive in criticism. His legal training helped him to expose illegal acts when the Government put the law to improper uses to further political ends. In the conduct of The Hindu he was scrupulously just to his political opponents and never allowed political differences to mar his personal cordial relations with men belonging to all camps. To young journalists he was ever a guide, philosopher and friend. During the sittings of the Joint Select Committee on Indian reforms he as a member of the Indian delegation brought his rare knowledge of administrative, financial and constitutional questions to bear on the subjects at issue and his cross-examination of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee helped to dissipate the mists of prejudice and interested propaganda with which many of them sought to confuse issues. He returned from England broken in health and spirit and did not have many days to live.

The London Times described him as "one of the most gifted of successful Indian journalists, diligent and quick sighted who left an abiding mark in his own brilliant journal on Indian journalism"

N Raghunathan, one of his chief lieutenants in The Hindu, said Iyengar was a man who managed to achieve distinction both as a politician and a journalist. He was able to achieve this because he had a well-stocked mind capable of constructive and creative thought and an ability to assimilate knowledge and make it a perfect instrument for work — political and journalistic. He managed to keep up the attitude of a student throughout his life. His deep knowledge of human nature enabled him to become a master of the art of managing men. In his presence personal animosities became meaningless and acerbities lost their edge. He possessed in an abundant measure that quality which one rarely found in cloistered journalists or among politicians who are born to the purple like the ruling families of England, namely, genuine democratic feeling. He had absolutely no side in him and he could easily establish community of interest with any person with whom he came into contact in public affairs. It was this quality which enabled him to play a prominent part in the Congress organisation and in the Swarajya Party. As a journalist his stubborn sincerity was a great asset. He always tried to see the other man's point of view on every public question. The one fault that was consistently found in him was what Raghunathan called in Tamil "*Dakshinyam*" which he explained by saying that Iyengar simply could not say 'no' however inconvenient the request provided it did not touch the fundamentals. He was a great editor, a great politician and he was equally a great citizen and public spirited Indian who laboured for his country.

Another friend and collaborator of Iyengar said he had contacts with the official as with the unofficial world and it was his constant endeavour to synthesise and strengthen the ties between the two. He had little of the ego in him and there was no aggressive assertion of self-importance in the parts he played; he had no eyes for the plaudits of the market place. He was content to serve in humble and unassuming ways and found his reward in the service itself.

A close friend, Rao Bahadur K. V. Sessa Iyengar said Iyengar's "struggle against personal ailments was a chapter of heroism in the annals of Indian nationalism". Courteous and genial, he always elevated ordinary conversation to a high intellectual and patriotic plane where personalities disappeared and principles and policies took their place. The stress of Indian politics perhaps inevitably placed too heavy a strain on the energy of public workers. It would not be incorrect to say that Iyengar's health broke down under the excessive pressure of public duties.

In an address in Bangalore in November, 1932 on the "Press in Indian National Life", Rangaswami Iyengar had said that in his boyhood days the circulation peon of the local reading room was a familiar sight, quickly pacing the streets of the mofussil station to complete the luxury of taking the newspaper of the day to the houses of first class members in circulation so that he might place it on the table of the reading room in time for the second and third class members to peruse. At the table the newspaper got analysed by sheets, sometimes by half sheets, when exciting news appeared and the contents were pored over by many members literally putting their heads together or later a loud throated member would read out the finished periods of a Congress orator or the sententious comments of a great editor. Iyengar drew a distinction between the "sales" and the effective "circulation" of a paper. In India it was said people did not buy books but borrowed them. This was true in ever greater degree of newspapers. Owing to economic reasons the readers of a newspaper represented at least 10 times as much as the number of copies actually printed. Joint subscribers, readers in libraries and reading rooms, people on their way home in tram cars who quickly took in the contents of the day's paper borrowed from their neighbour, were familiar phenomena. Among Indian edited newspapers political changes in the latter half of the 19th century produced an amount of vigour and buoyancy that sustained their production at a high standard until repressive policies originating in the seditious prosecutions of 1897 culminated in the enactment of a drastic Press Act in 1911. During world war I for the first time in its history high officials of the Government went out of their way to propitiate the great instrument of propaganda — the Press. Publicity Boards were established in many centres and clever officials were appointed to be nice to the men who not so long ago were regarded as scum by the secretariats. The uniform political preponderance that had characterised the expansion of the Press since the days when India's political struggle began would become modified once political aims and aspirations were realised in a substantial measure, Iyengar said. Forces of evolution, conflict and struggle were bound to develop in the future within the nation itself.

A month prior to the death of Rangaswami Iyengar The Hindu had suffered a grievous loss in the passing away of P. R. Murugesu Mudaliar, its chief sports reporter for 20 years and the maker of its sports page who died on January 9, 1934 at the age of 52. The Hindu said he never spared himself in advancing the cause of sports in Madras. "His reports of sporting events in the city were authoritative and fearless and were looked forward to by all sportsmen. Without in any way indulging in mere personalities he never hesitated to criticise the actions of sports authorities or the players themselves when he felt called upon to do so. The Hindu said he was an all round sportsman. He was a

fine sprinter, had won in many lawn tennis tournaments and played in representative cricket fixtures. But he chiefly shone in football and hockey. "To say that hockey in Madras owes its very existence to him is merely to speak the truth", The Hindu said. "He was responsible for organisation of the game in Madras".

Rangaswami Iyengar's death again posed the question as it did after the death of his predecessor — who should be the new Editor? V. K. Narasimhan, biographer of K. Srinivasan, writes "V. S. Ramaswami Sastri and K. P. Viswanatha Aiyer were the Senior Assistant Editors and together with N. Raghunatha Aiyer they constituted the principal leader writers for the paper. For 24 hours there were earnest consultations between Srinivasan and the members of his family circle as well as his principal editorial assistants. Much against his own wish Srinivasan was induced by his relations to take over the mantle of Editorship. From February 6, 1934, K. Srinivasan became the Managing Editor of The Hindu, a position he held till his death in 1959".

When the silver jubilee of the reign of King George V was celebrated in May, 1935 The Hindu published a three-page article by William James Makin reviewing the stewardship of King George V and the developments that had taken place in the empire during a quarter of a century. It also published a pageful of pictures of the royal family and for the next few days its columns were full of reports of celebrations of the event at home and abroad. In a graceful editorial felicitating the King and the Queen, The Hindu did not forget to stress the fact that "successive British Governments had failed to implement the promise of Dominion Status to India" and added "on this occasion of great rejoicing in the Empire the people of India cannot forget their sense of disappointment at the inferior place they occupy in it. They have been denied that elation and pride of achievement which the autonomous democracies who regard King George as their constitutional head must feel today".

The Hindu sent a Special Correspondent to Quetta which had been destroyed by an earthquake in June, 1935. The number of killed was variously estimated at 20,000 to 30,000. In a dispatch from the "city of the dead", the Special Correspondent said: "The city of the dead, which is what Quetta is today is in ruins. As our train slowly steamed into the city not a single house was found having escaped the effects of the earthquake. Most of them had toppled over while the roofs of several of them were found fairly intact but on the ground. As we entered Quetta we saw a big blaze at a distance and on enquiry it was found to be the funeral pyre on which both Hindu and Muslim dead were being cremated together with the aid of kerosene or petrol by the military. This mass cremation, grim testimony to the heaviness of the death toll, was being adopted as a measure of precaution against infection, as also because the identity of several corpses was unknown. Excepting a lucky few, almost the entire civil police force has been wiped out".

Among the victims of the Quetta earthquake The Hindu along with other papers reported that of the famous Indian cricketer Mahomed Nissar who was later found alive, hale and hearty. The Hindu wrote: "Mahomed Nissar the Indian test cricketer who was stated to have lost his life in the disastrous catastrophe in Quetta is happily alive and well. It has never given us greater pleasure to publish a contradiction of an incorrect item of news. It appears that among the tens of thousands who perished in Quetta was a promising young

cricketer of the same name as the India bowler, who had come to that ill-fated city with a Karachi touring team; and the mistake seems to have arisen out of the confusion. It is a belief vigorously held by many of our countrymen that a man with whose name rumour has been unkindly busy in this manner will be assured of more than the normal span of life. Let us hope this will be Nissar's good fortune and the country's".

On the political front, the question arose whether the Congress should accept the new constitution of 1935 and assume office under it in the provinces. The Hindu devoted its energies to impress on the Congress leaders the need to capture all provincial legislatures and accept office to push through as much as possible of constructive activity. The Congress Working Committee which discussed the question at Wardha in August, 1935 postponed a decision as it considered the issue premature. The Hindu did not think so and said an early decision was necessary to galvanise the people into activity. It wrote: "The new constitution is an accomplished fact, the united protest of the nation has not availed to modify it in the slightest respect in the direction of making it more acceptable. The question then is what should be done in the face of the certainty of such an unsatisfactory constitution coming into force".

The Hindu referred to the Congress leaders' thinking of resisting the constitution by forming alliances with other political parties and said "If by resistance to the new constitution is understood the adoption of an attitude of sterile negation or of uniform and indiscriminating obstruction, it is obvious that apart from the question whether such a policy would be practicable in the new conditions created by the constitution, it would be impossible for the Congress to enlist the co-operation of other political parties in the pursuit of such a policy. If on the other hand, the object of the Congress is to prevent at all costs a lethargic acquiescence in the new constitution it is essential that the Congress should lose no chance of placing itself in a position whence it can focus all the energies of the country on the attainment of the grand objective of Swaraj and at the same time utilise even such restricted opportunities as may be available under the new constitution to push forward those programmes of constructive activity which alone can build up the bone and marrow of the nation. From this it logically follows that the Congress should not only aim at capturing, in the nationalist interest, the various provincial legislatures, but should not shrink from the responsibility of taking office that would flow there from, as that course alone would effectively prevent unrepresentative and self-seeking groups from misusing positions of power and would at the same time further positive work in the direction of securing national ends. The whole trend of Congress policy during the last 15 months has been steadily in the direction of making use of all methods, Parliamentary as well as other, for enforcing the will of the people. It is too late therefore to discuss the merits of council entry, and the contesting of elections under the new constitution by the Congress would logically involve the lifting of the ban on Congressmen accepting office. It is high time that the issue was faced squarely and settled in a manner that would promote the best interests of the country".

The issue was allowed to hang fire by the Congress Working Committee which at its Madras meeting in October reiterated its Wardha resolution, saying it "is premature, impolitic and inadvisable to come to a decision on the question of acceptance or non-acceptance of office at this stage". The Hindu

was unhappy and urged that the demand for the lifting of the ban on acceptance of office flowed "naturally from the decision to contest elections to the councils and the Bombay Congress while deciding to reject the constitution, simultaneously ratified the A I C C decision to contest the elections to the councils" The Hindu said the lifting of the ban would contribute greatly to the elimination of the differences between the various schools of Congress thought" It added "Any delay in making it clear that the Congress has no intention of imposing upon itself any limitation as to the nature and scope of its Parliamentary activities any more than on its activities outside the councils would be extremely undesirable".

Even as the political situation remained stagnant, the New Delhi Correspondent in a dispatch on December 6 reviewed the Government's attitude to the Congress. "Whispers go round the Secretariat of the Government of India from time to time that an effort will shortly be made to bridge the gulf between the Congress and the Government Whence these reports originate it is difficult to say but certain well-meaning people love to attempt periodically the task of peace-maker. With every desire to be fair, I must say I have so far seen little indication of any real anxiety to make terms with the Congress or to recognise that it is for good or evil the largest political force in the country today "The Congress is dishonest and corrupt", that unfortunately seems to be the deep-rooted conviction in certain quarters. "He has Congress leanings" is a term of terrible reproach, whether it be with reference to a journalist who tries to do his work according to his lights or an Indian official who cannot quite forget he is an Indian even inside the Secretariat or a European non-official member of the Assembly who does not keep all Congressmen at arm's length. The gullibility of certain departments is almost pathetic and no canard is too grotesque to be swallowed if it involves the Congress prestige or integrity The absence of social contact between Congressmen and members of the Government during the session of the Legislative Assembly has probably led to certain stiffening of the attitude. There is much to be said for promoting contacts not only in lobbies but outside, not to mention the Viceroy's House".

The Congress was 50 years old in December, 1935 and The Hindu published a special supplement to mark the jubilee carrying articles by distinguished leaders past and present. In a four-column leader in which it paid its homage to the great national organisation, The Hindu wrote: "Alike in its modest origin, its long, chequered withal glorious career and the unique place it occupies in the affections of the Indian people today, it is *sui generis* among the political organisations that this country has known. For it has always been more than a political body, therein lying its strength . . . A significant proof of its catholicity is to be found in its seeking and in the early years obtaining the co-operation of some of the most far-seeing members of the British community in India, both official and non-official . . . The officials who had watched the beginnings of the national movement with indifference, bordering on contempt, were alarmed when they found it gaining rapidly in popular appeal. They began to dub it disloyal, and made much of the fact that with the exception of an enlightened minority the Muslims as a body stood aloof from the Congress under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. But the significant fact was not that a majority of the Muslims stood aloof, but that for the first time a section of them came to be persuaded that their interest as well as the interest of the

country lay in making common cause with other communities. The attitude of the Muslims towards the Congress has undergone many changes since. But it may be said with perfect fairness that in its attitude towards the Muslims the Congress has never deviated from its desire to carry them with it. The agitation against the Bengal partition which the Congress led was not an agitation against the Muslims but against the dismemberment of a homogeneous people. And both by the part it played in regard to the Lucknow Pact of 1916 and by its consistent attitude towards the Communal Award it has given practical proof of its conviction that no minority should be coerced and that it is the duty of the majority to win the confidence of minorities. Its efforts have, no doubt, but imperfectly succeeded so far, nevertheless it labours to compose political differences in the spirit of Gandhiji's advice after the Belgaum Congress. "We must tolerate each other and trust to time to convert the one or the other to the opposite belief". The second great secret of the strength of the Congress is that it is the product of evolution. While it may not be correct to say that the goal of India's progress was from the beginning clearly envisaged, the desire to achieve freedom was undoubtedly the deepest impulse that moved the founders of the Congress. The disparity between the ideal and the immediate objective which strikes the student of Congress history in the first three decades of its existence must be explained with reference to two primary facts — the belief widely prevalent that India could get reforms as gifts from Britain and the then character of the Congress as a movement representing the classes rather than the masses. There was a deep rooted belief shared by most educated Congressmen of the time that England was sincerely anxious to enlarge the bounds of freedom and all that was required was to demonstrate to her that India really wanted freedom. In the absence of representative institutions, the Congress sought to fill their place by functioning as an unofficial Parliament to ventilate grievances and ask for redress."

The Hindu noted that Congress in its early days was largely preoccupied with questions of status and racial equality. "It was on this sore spot that blow upon blow fell. To a Congress which believed in the magical virtues of British citizenship it came as a painful discovery that there was one law for the British and another for the Indian in his own land and that in other parts of the empire which he had helped to build up he was treated as a helot. But all these pinpricks paled into insignificance beside the terrible grief provoked by the Rowlatt bills and the Amritsar tragedy . . . . It was this tragedy that finally forced Indian nationalism to the conclusion that India's salvation must come from her own efforts and that self-government here and now could be the solvent of her many problems and the Gandhian era in Indian politics set in."

After referring to Gandhiji's role in moulding the Congress as a mass organisation, The Hindu said "Who can forget or fail to remember with gratitude that if today the nation holds its head high, in spite of temporary defeats, and is proudly conscious that it is master of its own destiny, we owe this splendid transformation to the magic touch of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi? The Congress has shown itself an incomparably keen and sensitive instrument of India's will in nothing so much as in the confiding faith with which it placed itself under Gandhiji's guidance and the loyalty with which it has striven to realise his high ideals . . . But for the short and bright interlude in Indo-British relations during the Irwin regime which culminated in the historic

Gandhi-Irwin Pact, there has been no realisation by the mighty power of England that in the Congress there is a power no less great, a power firmly grounded in the affections of the Indian people by virtue of long, honourable and tested service, and that in handing over the control of Indian affairs to the forces of nationalism represented by the Congress, Britain would be truly fulfilling the purposes of her rule. But no reverse or no hostility can damp the enthusiasm of our people or make them lose heart."

Among the many good friends of India among Englishmen in the early days of the Congress referred to by *The Hindu* was W. S. Caine, member of Parliament, about whom the former London Correspondent, Frederick Grubb wrote an article in the Jubilee supplement. He said that when Henry Fowler (afterwards Sir) was appointed Secretary of State for India after the Liberals were returned to power in 1892 it was hoped that something substantial would be done in the way of Indian reforms. "Although he was a man of radical antecedents, he proved a great disappointment so far as India was concerned. He became merely a whig doctrinaire with no vision and no understanding of Indian ideals. W. S. Caine and Wedderburn were first hoping to get the new Liberal Secretary of State to initiate a more progressive policy. Caine in particular took him in hand. He used to send him marked copies of *The Hindu* and other journals and he frequently buttonholed him in the lobby, in addition to putting numerous questions in the House. All these were unavailing however for we find Caine writing to your then Editor (G. Subramania Aiyer) a private letter (April, 1894) in which he said: 'I am afraid Fowler is being completely scooped up by the old officials of the India Office and we shall have to give him a rude awakening whenever an opportunity arises — he has all the most ridiculous Anglo-Indian prejudices already'. This I may say was written after a stormy interview. The fact is that Caine was a most unsparing critic of anyone who in his opinion was not doing the right thing by India. Caine could be complimentary at times as well as caustic. He would always tell Indians frankly what he thought of them and their ideas. But referring to Madras he once wrote to a European friend in India: "The Madras is a capital lot of fellows and have done really good work. There is more pluck and go in them than in all the other provinces of India combined."

The issue of office acceptance by the Congress was still unsolved and when in April, 1936 on the eve of the Lucknow session of the Congress, the Working Committee again postponed a decision, *The Hindu* wrote: "A party committed to perpetual opposition, however strong it may be, obviously cannot achieve anything like what it may do in this direction by accepting the responsibilities of office". *The Hindu* argued that if the Congress "has definitely committed itself to constitutional methods it cannot well refuse to take such further steps as are logically involved in these methods and are necessary to bring them to fruition."

*The Hindu* criticised Jawaharlal Nehru's presidential address at the Lucknow Congress for its ideological overtones. Declaring that the ultimate goal Mr. Nehru and his friends had in view was radically different from that which the Congress under Gandhiji's lead had steadily worked for, *The Hindu* said: "The ideology of the class war is one that in its exclusiveness and intolerance is altogether alien to the Indian spirit and out of tune with Gandhiji's teachings. Mr. Nehru makes a fundamental mistake in tilting at a bourgeoisie

class — upper middle class as he prefers to call it — which is largely a creature of his own imagination fed on the revolutionary literature of the West. The gulf between the middle classes and the masses is neither so deep nor so unbridgeable as he imagines and it is this fact that explains the paradox of middle class leadership of the mass movement to which he refers as inevitable. India's social economy in spite of the accretions that clog its surface from its contact with the West, is based on a fundamental realisation of the mutuality of interests that goes with a diversity of functions. It is undoubtedly desirable that leadership should not be the monopoly of the privileged few; but the obstacle to the masses exercising leadership is not the obstructiveness of the aristocracy and men of great possessions — a mere speck on the ocean of Indian poverty — but the ignorance and apathy of the masses themselves. There is no short cut to the removal of these handicaps, patient education alone can lift them out of the rut in which they have sunk for ages. Attempts to usher in the millenia overnight have by no means been so successful even in Soviet Russia as Mr. Nehru would have us believe while he himself confesses that 'Much has happened there which has pained me greatly and with which I disagree'. We cannot agree that India can achieve freedom only by following such perilous paths".

The Hindu opposed Jawaharlal Nehru's re-election as Congress President for the Faizpur session. "The re-election as Congress President", it wrote in November, 1936, "of one who believes that it is his duty to prepare the country for socialism will not only conduce to this desirable end; it is bound to be sedulously represented as a vote for socialism".

The Hindu held there were "matters of much more immediate urgency on which the Congress has to take a decision" and referred in this connection to the question of office acceptance on which Nehru held strong views, being uncompromisingly opposed to it. "It seems to us", The Hindu said, "that it would be hardly fair either to him or to the majority opinion in the Congress to re-elect him President knowing very well that a decision on the question of acceptance of office will have to be taken during his tenure of Presidentship".

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was also a candidate for the Presidentship, withdrew although he said he had his differences with Nehru on the question of socialism and C. Rajagopalachari, the third candidate, also withdrew. Nehru himself in a statement made it clear his re-election would not mean "a victory for socialism or for anti-office acceptance". He said his election "can only mean approval of my general line of activity during the last eight months by the majority of Congressmen and not my particular views on any issue". Nehru was re-elected President.

Commenting on Nehru's Presidential address at Faizpur, The Hindu wrote: "If there is to be a united front of all the progressive forces in this country for the purpose of winning political freedom it is very necessary not merely that the socialists should refrain from raising the issue of socialism till Swaraj is won but that they should make their readiness to do so plain and not wrap up their meaning in ambiguous language".

Again stressing the need to accept office, The Hindu said: "If only the Congress could arrive at an agreed programme of the changes that are required to bring the people of India into line with advanced nations socially, economically and politically, a disciplined Congress majority in the



legislatures, backed by the support of the masses could do more within a year or two to make England see reason than the Congress in the wilderness of eternal opposition might be able to do for decades. It is not a question of co-operating with the unwanted Act but of setting about functioning as a Swaraj Government would do, leaving it to the British power to non-co-operate if it dare by the use of the special powers vested in its representatives"

A month earlier when Nehru made a hectic election tour of the South, The Hindu gave him wide publicity and published extensive reports of its Special Correspondent who covered his tour. It also published a pen picture of Nehru by C. R. Srinivasan, Editor of The Swadeshamitran. "It was a remarkable tour", he wrote, "that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru completed recently in Tamil Nadu, 10 districts in 10 days, 10 days of incessant travel over mud roads, metalled roads and rail roads, 10 days of speeches galore to audiences great and small at all odd hours of the day and night, 10 days without privacy, rest or sleep, and not a wrinkle to show for the strain of it all

"Easily a million fresh faces must have crossed his vision during these 10 days and wherever he went people gathered in their hundreds and thousands to hear him speak. Where they had no opportunity to hear him they lined the roads to see him drive past, they ached for the sight of him. The beloved son of a great patriot, the favourite disciple of the Mahatma and last but not least, the pet aversion of the bureaucracy—these were enough to invest him with interest. And they were not all. He had revealed qualities of his iron will to mark him out from the ordinary run of men, his conception of freedom was pitched so high that periodic encroachments on it could not break his spirit; his conception of service was grounded so firm that even the death of a loving wife under tragic circumstances could not turn him from his path of duty. Is it any wonder he came South with a halo and men, women and children gathered round him, to see and hear him. Well may crowned heads envy the demonstrations of love and loyalty that marked his triumphant tour.

"All the same it was an embarrassing measure of attention and I wonder what Jawaharlal's reactions are. It has placed him on a pedestal, not easy to live upto and he has raised expectations also difficult to fulfil. For all his ideals and character, the Pandit that I saw was a very human man with many limitations, he has not the calm detachment of his Guru nor the dispassionate judgment of his father, he is so sure he is right that he has little tolerance to extend to others. Abrupt in manner, aggressive in tone and assertive in temperament, he dares you to disagree with him, but seems to derive small comfort when you agree with him; he is a very well read man but I am afraid not enough of the book of life. There is a vein of the mystic in him, at once his strength and weakness. He sees what is not visible to others, he misses much of what strikes you and me. He has confessed that often his mind's eye turns to the past, presumably for inspiration, more often, he says, it is rivetted on the future apparently for fulfilment. In between he has but an occasional glance to spare for the distressing present, yet to the practical politician, it is the present that matters. I have often watched him at close quarters, he shows no soft side in his make-up, there is no laughter in his outfit. He is terribly earnest, transparently sincere. That is why he impresses you in spite of all his limitations, the still small voice in him occasionally registers a rebuke; he confesses to it in his autobiography but he has little faith in it and does not care to cultivate it like his

Guru; the ego is strong in him. In all his talks, private and public, he almost suggests he is a one-idea man; he reduces all things in terms of imperialism. And his panacea to cure all ills is an indeterminate form of socialism"

The Hindu had earlier in November, 1935, published another pen picture of Jawaharlal, from its new London Correspondent, Leonard W. Matters, who went to Victoria Station, London towards the end of October to watch the arrival of Nehru with his daughter for a brief visit to Britain from Badenweiler where he was tending his sick wife Kamala (who passed away in February, 1936) "There was a tremendous crowd of Indians and Englishmen. Many of those present knew Pandit Nehru personally or at least had seen him at some time or other, perhaps in the midst of vast crowds in India; perhaps even within prison walls. I had never met him and yet it is quite possible that I was more sentimental with expectancy than most of those who would recognise him at sight for my thoughts were on the past as well as the present. A man was coming — a real man. He was to be welcomed in the heart of that empire under whose canons of political justice — as applied in India at least — he is quite a reprehensible and dangerous person, if not actually in law a "criminal" Englishmen and women eminently respectable, not cranks or fanatics, not case hardened like myself, were eager to grasp his hand and bid him welcome even to take him to their homes if only he could do them that honour. Waiting there I even wondered if perhaps some day the name of Nehru might be inscribed on the rolls of Freemen of London. Who knows? How easy it was for me later on to understand what Jawaharlal meant when he said that happenings in this world of ours are so strange and bewildering as to suggest that the only true perspective of things is to be gained by standing on one's head! When the man stepped out of the train there was almost a hush. I saw a beautifully featured pale face cast in a classic mould, certainly one of the most dignified and truly aristocratic faces I have ever seen. I felt as everybody who has ever met him must feel that Jawaharlal is a presence and in an immeasurable degree much more than a politician. It is a strange world — a stupid world beyond doubt — that must keep such men in prison, no matter what the reason may be"

Matters had something to say about Nehru's "brusque" manner when he referred to his activities in London in June, 1938 in his London letter. "Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru must be a very patient man or he could never have gone through all the trials and tribulations to which he has been subjected, nor could he have struggled so long and so hard in the cause of India. Yet Mr. Nehru displays a somewhat tart manner to certain callers and particularly towards young journalists. He was guilty of a fiery outburst the other afternoon when certain not altogether experienced representatives of Indian newspapers cornered him and pressed him to say what had transpired during his interview with the Secretary of State that same day. I was not present at the moment but the report is that Mr. Nehru exhibited considerable anger over the question. Wiser hands or heads would not have put the question except in a manner to solicit a negative answer and disarm objection for they would have realised that the ex-President of the Congress could not disclose what was said on a privileged and confidential occasion. On the other hand, Mr. Nehru might well have appreciated the natural anxiety of the newspapermen to ascertain, if they could, what was said by him and to him. A little exercise of

what Lord Baldwin once described, when it was believed an official secret had been betrayed, as "intelligent anticipation" might however have given them a they wanted. Surely, everybody can safely guess what Mr. Nehru said to the Secretary of State and what the Minister said to him."

As the election campaign in the provinces got into its stride with the big gun of the Congress, Nehru the biggest of them all, storming the electorate with non-stop speeches and exhortations, *The Hindu* in January, 1937 was full of election reports, more especially of Congress election meetings for which the space was unlimited. It threw open its pages especially to Congress propaganda in the districts. On January 18, its Delhi Correspondent reported "Mammoth audiences are reported to have listened to Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru in his tour of the Punjab by aeroplane. While nationalist newspapers report scenes of unparalleled enthusiasm everywhere, even the *Statesman* this morning admits that the Congress has good chances of success in several provinces."

"Fill the yellow boxes" was one of the headings to an election story (yellow was the colour allotted to the Congress party in the elections in which voters identified the party's candidate they wanted to vote for by the colour of the ballot box). In Madras the first unopposed return to the Assembly was that of a Congress candidate from the Sattur-Aruppukotta rural constituency and he was K. Kamaraj Nadar. As Madras got ready to go to the polls, news came of Congress majority in Orissa Assembly and its emergence as the largest party in Bengal.

Urging Madras to follow the example set by voters in other provinces *The Hindu* said: "Voters should require little persuasion at this time of the day to vote for the Congress". It said against the Congress "are ranged a party of reactionary sectionalists whose dismal record of 15 years is for all to see and a rather miscellaneous group which has no past to throw light on its professions and no distinctive policy or programme to show that it will satisfy a felt need or make a worthwhile contribution to public life in the province. In the circumstances the electorate should have little difficulty in plumping solidly in favour of the Congress". On the eve of the polling in Madras city, one of the Congress candidates, N. S. Varadachari, was set upon by a gang of rowdies in Triplicane and seriously injured. *The Hindu* featured the story with a column-long report and carried a picture of Varadachari with a bandaged head leading an election procession in his constituency.

The election results started coming in from February 24, 1937 and they showed that the Congress was sweeping the polls in Madras. On February 25, the paper said that the Congress had lost only one general seat and that the Chief Minister, the Raja of Bobbili, and P. T. Rajan, P.W.D. Minister, both stalwarts of the Justice party had been defeated by Congress candidates. *The Hindu's* headings for the story were: Victory all round. Only one general seat lost; Chief Minister defeated. Sir P. T. Rajan Loses. Big majority for Congress."

Margaret Cousins, great friend of India and leader of the Women's movement who herself courted imprisonment during the satyagraha movement, provided an eye-witness account of polling in the Shermadevi (Tirunelveli District) general constituency in which a woman was the Congress candidate and pitted against men candidates. "For the past six weeks", she wrote, "Srimathi Lakshmi Ammal (the Congress candidate) and her lieutenants have

been painting the constituency yellow. Her opponent is a very wealthy man, the President of the District Board. But Lakshmi Ammal has the courage of a lion, unlimited faith in the power of the Congress and has been a veritable Arjuna of energy and industry. Her husband, Dr. Sankara Aiyer, is her election agent and they have formed an ideal team. Now is the day of the test. Over 200 villages have been visited, the majority of an electorate of 56,000 harangued, exhorted, persuaded and directed. It has been immense work. For some days now I have been absorbed into its maelstrom which has shaken and wakened the masses of India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin". There was a footnote by the Editor that Lakshmi Ammal had won the seat by 21,756 votes to 10,278 secured by her chief rival.

The Congress swept the polls in the United Provinces also and the New Delhi Correspondent in a dispatch said: "Official circles in New Delhi are frankly puzzled by the phenomenal success of the Congress Party in the United Provinces. Though internal dissensions in the ranks of the Nationalist Agriculturist Party had prepared the official mind for a considerable success of the Congress at the polls, it was not anticipated that this party would capture practically all seats, rural and urban, by overwhelming majorities".

In a review of the election results in Madras (in which the Congress won 159 out of 215 seats in the Assembly with the Justice party getting only 16), The Hindu noted that most of the rural voters preferred to walk to the polling stations, "a fact which suggests that this must have been the most economical general election held in the country at any rate so far as the Congress is concerned". It asked: "What is the significance of the practical wiping out of all opposition to the Congress? The party which has been in office more or less continuously for 15 years and which was never tired of boasting as its unique claim to grateful remembrance that it worked dyarchy successfully, has secured barely 16 seats in a house of 215 members. The great lesson that the election should teach the authorities is that no attempt to rig up the legislatures or to gerrymander the constituencies with a view to bolstering up reaction can hope to succeed against the onslaught of a strongly organised party backed by all the progressive elements in the nation and having distinctive policy and programme. A party exalting communal and sectional aims above the interest of the people as a whole would never have had a chance but for the accident that the Congress decided 15 years ago to boycott the legislatures. The moment that decision was reversed the popular verdict at any electoral contest that might follow was a foregone conclusion. The simple meaning of the huge majority that the Congress has secured is that the people feel convinced that so long as Swaraj remains to be won the nation must act as one party in concentrating on that supreme end and no quarter must be given to those who will not fall in".

The Hindu stressed that on social and economic questions there were recognisable divisions of opinion among Congressmen and "it is therefore essential that in chalking out its immediate work in the legislatures and elsewhere the Congress should take care not to give the impression that any particular group or ideology is allowed to dominate the counsels of the Congress at the expense of the others to impose upon the country in the name of the national organisation any policy or scheme of action which might be legitimately regarded as doing violence to the cherished views of the others.

For such domination would not only weaken the national front which might result in a grave setback to the freedom movement but to impoverish the stream of influences which should fertilise the national life when the major obstacle to the fullest self-expression has been removed. The aim of the Congress should therefore be to discover and strengthen the measure of agreement that there is among progressive elements, leaving the differences in the background. The best way of doing this would be by harnessing its energies to the task of putting through well-considered positive programmes in the legislatures and outside which should be complementary and aim at increasing the social cohesion, the economic strength and the political resources of the masses. Viewed from this angle the need for the Congress taking office in provinces where it has an undisputed majority should be self-evident."

A sidelight on the election was the revelation that Dr. C. R. Reddy had resigned from the Congress and, incidentally, of The Hindu habit of not publishing anything without verifying its accuracy. Tenneti Viswanatham, the Vizag Congress leader, in a statement to The Hindu, said that some friends after the election had told him that a certain person belonging to the Andhra University had voted against Viswanatham because Dr. C. R. Reddi asked him to do so. They wanted to know why a Congressman like Dr. C. R. Reddi should have worked against him. Viswanatham said he told them that Dr. Reddi had resigned from the Congress but on that account he did not expect Dr. Reddi to work against him. The Hindu Correspondent who was present and heard the news about Dr. Reddi flashed the report to his paper but he returned to Viswanatham two or three days later and told him his story about Dr. Reddi's resignation had been returned to him by his Editor who wanted authoritative confirmation of it. Viswanatham showed the Correspondent Dr. Reddi's resignation letter, and other correspondence that passed between them and the resignation story then appeared in The Hindu.

The issue of office acceptance by the Congress became a live issue when the leader of the Madras Legislature Congress Party, C. Rajagopalachari, advocated it in a Press interview in Wardha on March 13, 1937. The Hindu featured the story with double column headings (which it reserved for really very, very important stories) the first of which read: "Congress should accept office". On the other hand, the Congress President, Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing a meeting in Delhi said: "To hell with the constitution". He said the Congress had fought the elections to "wreck" the constitution. His considered view was that office should not be accepted as this would devolve on them a "great responsibility which they had no power to discharge".

As the Congress Working Committee met in New Delhi in March to consider the issue, B. Shiva Rao, The Hindu representative in the capital, said there were two schools of thought in the Committee on the question of office acceptance: the Gandhites and the Socialists. The Socialists, he said, believed they were committed by their principles to oppose acceptance of office by a pre-eminently nationalist body like the Congress. "They will endeavour to prove", he said, "that the Congress having committed itself to wrecking the constitution must not now seek to work it but must earnestly seek to destroy it. Gandhiji's view is that the Congress must accept office in order to develop its strength to use it at the next opportunity. Gandhiji contemplates the time

when it may be necessary to adopt direct action to gain the Congress objective of doing justice by the poor and the downtrodden. But he is against accepting office if that will mean taking office merely to give it up . . . . If a Ministry could function, say atleast for one or two years, enabling the Congress to do something tangible for the masses, his view is that the Congress must accept office"

On the same day *The Hindu* carried a late news story telephoned by Shiva Rao which said that the Working Committee had decided to accept office in provinces where the Congress commanded a majority in the legislature, provided the leader of the Congress party was assured that so long as he and the other Ministers acted within the constitution the Governor would not use his special power of interfering or setting aside or ignoring the advice of Ministers.

The text of the resolution which *The Hindu* carried the next day in a two-page special supplement also mentioned that the verdict of the electorate had shown that "the new Act therefore stands condemned and utterly rejected by the people . . . and the people have further declared that they desire to frame their own constitution based on national independence through the medium of a constituent assembly elected by adult franchise. The Committee therefore demands on behalf of the people of India that the new constitution be withdrawn"

Shiva Rao in a dispatch said that while the first half of the resolution bore the stamp of Nehru the concluding portion (on office acceptance) revealed the hand of Gandhiji. Shiva Rao added: "The resolution is a compromise. Every phrase in the resolution has been carefully weighed. The formula relating to acceptance of Ministry is a modification of Gandhiji's Wardha formula that Ministry should be accepted only after the Governors make a declaration that they would not use their special powers"

On the same page as the C.W.C. resolution appeared, *The Hindu* published the following Reuter's story from London: "Reuter learns from well informed authority that Governors of provinces will not and cannot give the Congress leaders any assurances regarding exercise of their special powers. If the Congress leaders insist on receiving definite assurances regarding these powers they will not get them and a complete deadlock will arise"

Shiva Rao, however, quoting authoritative sources in New Delhi said Reuter's report was "entirely unauthorised". As it happened Reuter proved right.

When the All-India Congress Committee ratified the Working Committee's resolution on office acceptance after a stormy debate in which the opposition was led by the Socialists and C. Rajagopalachari vehemently defended the resolution, *The Hindu* remarked it was "one more proof that the great organisation, while steadily pursuing the ideal of Purna Swaraj, can with a magnificent sense of reality adapt its course to the changing needs of the times and yet preserve its unity intact". It added; "No Governor who values peace or who is alive to the responsibility that is placed upon him of helping in the rapid evolution of full self-government can fail to respond to this gesture by the Congress".

In expressing this hope *The Hindu* was too optimistic for when the Congress leaders in the provinces (six out of 11) where their party was in a majority met the Governors on the latter's invitation they could not get the assurances they sought from the head of the province

Explaining what the Congress sought from the Governors. The Hindu wrote on March 25, 1937 "It may be at once stated that the Congress does not ask for a castiron pledge with the object of changing the constitution by a side wind as it were, or altering its general contour. All that it contemplates is that Congress leaders before agreeing to form ministries should be assured that in their attempts to promote all measures making for moral, social and economic welfare — a positive duty which it may be noted is laid upon the Governor by the instrument of instructions — they will have the unstinted co-operation of the Governor and all the assistance which it is in his power to give them. If the repeated declarations of the British Government mean anything there should be no difficulty about the Governor satisfying them on this head. . . The Congress asks that to the extent such freedom is allowed him by the constitution, the Governor, shall in the provincial sphere, agree in advance to act in effect as if he were the representative of the British crown in a fully self-governing Dominion. It is only if he is prepared to repose confidence in his Ministers in this manner can the Congress Ministers reciprocate that confidence and conduct themselves like the responsible Ministers in the Dominions"

As the Governors declined to give the assurance asked for, the Congress leaders refused to accept office and a deadlock ensued which was sought to be averted in some provinces like Madras by the formation of an interim Ministry

The Hindu said the Governors' replies bore a "family" resemblance which showed their common origin. Prudence as well as statesmanship should have dictated to Britain the wise course of making the gesture of goodwill the Congress was looking for. "That she has failed can only be attributed to the false sense of prestige which has ruined her relations with India and the chronic unwillingness to give with grace and at the proper time what she concedes only when she must".

As the British regime frantically tried to instal some ministry or other in the provinces to mark the inauguration of the new constitution on April 1, The Hindu wrote: "Frantic attempts are being made to patch up some sort of ministry in the six Congress provinces, as they may be conveniently called, against the inauguration of provincial autonomy tomorrow. That these attempts to save the face of the Government are being made is hardly more remarkable than the readiness with which a handful of Indians in each province have lent themselves to the elaborate legal pretence that the constitution is not stillborn". Demanding the summoning of the Madras Legislature, The Hindu said: "Apart from other considerations, the Government of Madras could not function with any the slightest pretence of constitutionality if the summoning of the legislature should be postponed even for a week as a Ministry has been set up which on the face of it represents nobody and which must establish its credentials just before it can settle down to work with any claim to authority".

The Hindu commented on the King's message inaugurating Provincial autonomy on April 1 and remarked that it was wrong to claim that "Provincial autonomy" came into operation that day. The Hindu warned: "To keep the legislature in suspended animation would be an intolerable insult to the electorate which may well ask whether the Government brought it into being

only to make mock of it. The doctrine of Britain's trusteeship for the Indian masses was based on the contention that the Indian intelligentsia could not speak with authority for the people at large whose welfare was ever close, we were assured, to the heart of Britain. A widely enlarged electorate under a scheme which the present Secretary of State described the other day as an "experiment in self-government" has unmistakably repudiated this doctrine and declared its confidence in the Congress by returning its representatives to the legislature with overwhelming majorities. With what show of reason then could the Government maintain that they respect the wishes of the people or work to promote their welfare, if they deliberately flout the verdict of the polls and caricature the idea of responsible Government? If the new Ministers have any regard either for political honesty or constitutional propriety they should accept the Congress challenge and face the legislature."

Hartal was observed in Madras and all over India on April 1 to mark "Anti-constitution day." "The remarkable completeness of the hartal", said *The Hindu*, "was all the more striking because it was entirely spontaneous and altogether peaceful. It should demonstrate to the world if any further proof were needed after the recent elections, the unique hold that the Congress has on all sections of the community and the resentment with which the imposed constitution is regarded in India."

Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, said in the House of Lords on April 8 that it was not possible for Governors to give the assurance asked for without amending the constitution and also indicated that no purpose would be served by the Viceroy meeting Gandhiji.

"Lord Zetland is not for peace", said *The Hindu*. "That is the impression the statement in the House of Lords is bound to leave on the mind of the Indian public. If he represents the attitude of H.M.'s Government correctly they are singularly unmindful of the realities of the Indian situation and contemptuous of Indian opinion as it has unmistakably manifested itself."

On April 15, 1937, leading citizens of Madras including Kasturi Srinivasan, Managing Editor of *The Hindu*, in a statement said: "We feel that the situation should be immediately taken on hand and a solution found for it without delay. We strongly feel that if things are now allowed to drift the situation may easily worsen and defy solution."

The climate in the Indian capital was conveyed to Kasturi Srinivasan by Shiva Rao in a letter on April 14 in which he said "I had a long talk with (Sir James) Grigg (Finance Member) yesterday. He like (Sir Nripendra Nath) Sircar (Law Member) seems to be convinced that both Jawaharlal and Gandhiji are determined not to allow the Congress to take office . . . This attitude on the part of the Executive Council, I am afraid, makes a solution even more difficult. There is a firm belief here among officials that if Gandhiji had not gone to Madras, C. R. (Rajagopalachari) and (Lord) Erskine (Governor of Madras) would have come to a settlement. . . I do not like the idea that seems to be spreading in Government quarters here that a civil disobedience movement is inevitable and they must get ready for it. Repression, I have been told by members of the Government, would be effective this time and the movement would be squashed within a few months."

Kasturi Srinivasan did not believe that any initiative could be expected from Lord Erskine and thought it should come from Simla. He wrote to Shiva Rao



on May 17 "I am afraid Lord Erskine has just now around him a very bad set of advisers and it is hopeless to expect any initiative from him. Unless a specific directive comes from Simla he will not move. C. R. told me definitely that once the Governors call the Congress leaders and explain their positions in terms of the Zetland statement and invite them to form the Government the Congress leaders would find it very difficult to refuse to take up office. For himself he is sure he will persuade the Governor that undue emphasis will not be put on the form of getting out when serious differences arose. If the Governor does not desire to adopt dismissal, he can demand the resignation and even if the Government does not agree to this, the Congress may not ultimately press for it once the Provincial Governors reinvoke the Congress and have a talk, and very probably if the Government feels the assurance of dismissal is also an abrogation of the Act, Mr. Gandhi will not insist on this. I am unable to see what difficulty the Government feel about meeting the provincial leaders and enquiring if they would take up office."

Shiva Rao wrote back to say: "I thought that the news contained in your letter about C. R. was of such importance that it should be conveyed to the Viceregal Lodge. That has been done and (Sir George) Laithwaite (Private Secretary to the Viceroy) said he was very glad indeed to have it. I believe it has made some difference."

The statement by Lord Zetland referred to in Kasturi Srinivasan's letter was made by the Secretary of State in the House of Lords on May 6 in the course of which he said: "The reserved powers of which so much has been made by the Congress will not normally be in operation; indeed they will only come into the picture if he (Governor) considers that the carefully limited special responsibilities laid upon him by the Act and impressed upon him by the Instrument of Instructions are involved. But even if the question of their use does arise — here is emphasised the spirit in which it was intended that the constitution should be worked — it would be altogether wrong to assume that the Governor would immediately set himself in open opposition to his Ministry".

The Hindu had welcomed this clarification of policy as a "more earnest attempt to understand the Congress viewpoint than was apparent in his earlier statement". It declared that the differences between the position of the Government and that of the Congress had narrowed down considerably and added: "It is the plain duty of the Governors now to renew their invitation to the Congress leaders to form Ministries"

Prior to Lord Zetland's statement, Gandhiji in an interview to Shiva Rao at Poona on April 22 had made it clear that what he wanted was an assurance which he still held was within the powers of the Governors to give, that they would not interfere with the day-to-day administration of the province. For under the Act, "It is not the Governor but the Ministers who are responsible for the administration of the Province within the sphere prescribed by the Act" Gandhiji added the assurance contemplated non-interference not non-dismissal. "But dismissal of Ministers would mean dissolution and fresh election".

The Hindu wrote that after Gandhiji's clarification of what the Congress wanted there could be no justification for the "Government sitting tight and for its apologists pleading that the Congress position is ambiguous". It added. "Ministers who discharge their duties with a full realisation of their

responsibility and a full knowledge of the limitations and restrictions which the safeguards impose, are not likely to go out of their way to create deadlocks merely for the pleasure of doing so or to override the legitimate rights of minorities and other interests which are sought to be protected by the Governor's reserve powers. If the Governor on his side conducts himself with an equally scrupulous regard for the just rights and powers of the Ministers there should be no room for a clash between him and them. The assurance the Congress wants is in truth neither more nor less than an assurance that the Governor will so conduct himself uniformly."

On May 12, the Editor of *The Hindu* sent a telegram to Gandhiji seeking clarification of a statement he made in which he had said with reference to Lord Zetland's latest statement. "I fear it is no contribution to removal of deadlock". Gandhiji in reply said that while Lord Zetland's statement was agreeably worded it did not remove the deadlock in the sense that it "gives no specific answer to the specific Congress demand namely, that the method by which the Governors will use their powers of interference, whenever they fear an emergency, would be that of dismissal of the Ministry rather than expecting the Ministry to resign or submit to the Governor's wishes". *The Hindu* welcoming the clarification wrote "Whatever the views of the Congress may be regarding the Act, the Congress does not now ask the Governor to alter the law but only desires a working arrangement under which the Governor will interfere only by the process of dismissal"

When Shiva Rao secured the interview with Gandhiji in Poona in April it was on a mission entrusted to him by the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow. One morning in April Shiva Rao received a message from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy asking him to meet His Excellency. Shiva Rao had not met Linlithgow before, except at one or two formal functions. "Do you know Mr. Gandhi", the Viceroy asked him. "Yes, Sir", Shiva Rao replied, "I have known him for 20 years". "I have not yet met him", the Viceroy said, "though I would like to do so. Do you think he can be trusted to keep a secret?"

"There is no man in India with a more scrupulous sense of honesty", Shiva Rao replied. The Viceroy showed him a press cutting of a message sent by Shiva Rao to the *Manchester Guardian* (Shiva Rao was also the Indian Correspondent of the *Guardian*) and said. "This has attracted the attention of the Secretary of State. What is your authority for saying that the Congress Party might reconsider its attitude if the British Government accepts your formula as a basis for negotiations?"

Shiva Rao explained his message was drafted after a detailed discussion with C. Rajagopalachari and he certainly knew Gandhiji's mind better than any other Congress leader. If Gandhiji was satisfied the Congress high command would accept his lead, Shiva Rao said.

The Viceroy remarked, "This certainly makes a difference", but he wanted certain clarifications before he could advise the Secretary of State and he mentioned four points on which he wanted clarification. Shiva Rao said he would meet Gandhiji and put to him these four points as questions from a pressman after privately telling him that the Viceroy and the Secretary of State wanted these clarifications. The Viceroy agreed and Shiva Rao cancelling a projected holiday in Kashmir, proceeded to meet Gandhiji.

On June 22, 1937, the Viceroy issued a policy statement defining the scope of Governor's powers and *The Hindu* commented that Lord Linlithgow had explained the implications of the provisions of the Act "in terms which are generally acceptable". It wrote "The Minister's authority over the entire field of executive administration is accepted, the initiative in all matters of administration is tacitly agreed to lie with the Ministers, the nature of special responsibilities and the scope and manner of the exercise thereof have been redefined and the suggestion that the Governor is entitled to interfere with the day-to-day administration of the province outside the limited range of the responsibilities specially confined to him is categorically repudiated. The Congress has however not secured all that it has wanted. Its misgivings have not, all of them, been set at rest. But we are sure it will give every consideration to a solemn declaration backed by every authority concerned in the working of the Act, that the Provincial Autonomy contemplated in the Act is real and that it will be worked in the spirit and in the letter as a measure which has conferred a genuine Parliamentary form of democratic Government on India".

Writing again on the eve of the meeting of the Congress Working Committee in July, *The Hindu* told the Congress leaders "It is a generally admitted fact that public opinion in most if not all these six provinces is predominantly in favour of the Congress taking office. The fact that whatever might be the differences of opinion on minor matters all sections in the country look up to the Congress for leadership is not, we may be sure, likely to be lost on British statesmen upon whose minds the events of the past three months have, it may be found, left a more vivid impression of the power and influence of the Congress than even the great mass movements of the recent past".

The atmosphere for a decision on acceptance of office was favourable as the Congress Working Committee met in Wardha on July 4. Gandhiji and Nehru conferred for long hours, according to *The Hindu* Special Correspondent. He wrote that Nehru travelled in a bullock cart from Wardha to meet Gandhiji at Shevgaon situated right in the middle of black cotton fields through which one had to wade as there was no metal road leading to it. "Overnight rain", he said "had made the route very slushy. Mr. Nehru had an interesting experience going to meet Gandhiji this morning. He started in a bullock cart, but even bullocks found it difficult to negotiate the road. After doing half the distance, the Congress President had to abandon the conveyance and foot it, which he found no difficulty in doing, though his companion, Mr. Abul Kalam Azad found the trip rather trying. Mr. Nehru had literally to tow him in certain spots. The weather was however kind to them in the evening. There was bright sunshine and a good breeze which enabled them to use the conveyance on the return journey".

The Special Correspondent wrote on July 7 that the C.W.C. had decided to permit Congressmen to accept office following the declarations of the Viceroy and Lord Zetland which were considered as making an approach to the Congress demand although falling short of the assurances demanded by it. The committee, he said, felt that "the situation created by the circumstances and events that have taken place afterwards warrants the belief that it will not be easy for the Governors to use the special powers".

The Correspondent also reported an interview with Nehru who was asked if the Congress would not be criticised as eating the humble pie by its decision. Nehru replied "The C.W.C., like the King, can do no wrong"

The Hindu said the C.W.C. decision should demonstrate to the world "the political sagacity and the consummate leadership by which the Congress Executive has under Mahatma's guidance, strengthened the prestige of the Congress and maintained its unity"

The Simla Correspondent reported. "All's well that ends well is the feeling uppermost here today. The fact that the Madras Legislature will meet earlier than the legislatures of other provinces is regarded as encouraging since Lord Erskine and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, according to impressions prevalent here, will establish such relations from the start as will enable the Congress Governments in other provinces to be inaugurated in an atmosphere of goodwill and harmony".

In a private letter to Kasturi Srinivasan, Shiva Rao wrote. "The news of the decision of the C.W.C. reached us just before 6 yesterday afternoon (July 7, 1937). There is general recognition of the fact that The Hindu played a very important part through all the stages of the three months controversy. It must be a matter of great satisfaction to you that it has ended in this way".

In a letter to The Hindu, S. Satyamurthi wrote: "I should like to offer my congratulations to The Hindu for the success which has attended its bold and consistent attitude on the question of office acceptance by the Congress. As one who has worked for this for many months I have found no more powerful ally. It was not easy for a nationalist newspaper to take an attitude which was then unpopular. The Working Committee has come to the present decision due to pressure of public opinion throughout the country, particularly in Madras Province. Among the organs of public opinion which supported this new orientation of Congress policy The Hindu occupies a high place"

On July 14, 1937, the first Congress Ministry in Madras was announced, consisting of ten members and led by C. Rajagopalachari. Describing C. R.'s arrival at Government House to meet the Governor, The Hindu said "Clad in snow white Khaddar — dhoti, shirt and chaddar — and holding a file in his left hand Mr. Rajagopalachari stepped out of a car conspicuous with the Congress tricolour flag on its bonnet". The Hindu remarked on the "comparative youthfulness" of the new Ministers and added. "It (the ministry) will be judged ultimately by the fidelity with which it attempts to translate Congress ideals into practice and the contribution it makes to the all round betterment of the condition of the people. It is fortunate in being led by a man of Mr. Rajagopalachari's calibre".

**E**VEN AS TheHindu was overwhelmed by the political problems demanding attention at home it had not overlooked the foreign scene the developments where were full of foreboding. Aggression became the watchword of the Fascist powers and when Italy's Mussolini led the way by his cold-blooded invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 while the League of Nations looked on impotently, The Hindu warned that "if a terrible holocaust was to be averted world opinion must assert itself speedily and effectively". The Hindu made special arrangements with London newspapers for use of their war correspondents' reports and published articles and features which enabled the reader to have a complete idea of what was happening and the background story. When Ethiopia finally collapsed under the weight of the invader and Emperor Haile Selassie fled the country The Hindu published the Emperor's story of Italy's naked aggression.

And in Asia Japan marched into China launching on a protracted war in 1937. "It is two months today since war broke out in China", The Hindu wrote in September, 1937. "Chinese resistance to the invader though taken by surprise cannot be stifled so easily. It is desperate resistance no doubt and it may be that ultimately the superior equipment of the enemy will tell unless other factors intervene".

Asking what China could expect from the world today in the furtherance of her just and heroic struggle, The Hindu wrote: "She has decided to appeal to the League of Nations against Japanese aggression but will any purpose be served by such a procedure? ... Japan will not be bothered if the League were to pass another resolution indicting her". The paper appealed to the four "democratic powers of U S A , Britain, France and Russia to curb Japan and declare emphatically that they will take action if Japan proceeds with her plans". The Hindu suggested an economic blockade by the four powers which it said "is more than enough to deal an effective blow at Japan's by no means robust financial and economic position".

In another editorial on September 11, The Hindu referred to the big Japanese offensive in North China and said: "Propaganda has done its work and we find that the Japanese nation today is in the grip of that mad and unreasoning patriotic fervour of a nation at war which brooks neither conciliation nor compromise. It is too late to talk in terms of prospects for peace. War must

have its toll but the sympathies of all people who respect elementary principles of justice and freedom will be with the Chinese people"

On October 19, 1937, The Hindu announced it had great pleasure "in informing our readers that we have arranged to publish four cabled dispatches a week from Madame Chiang Kai-shek, the wife of China's Premier and herself a member of the Supreme War Council at Nanking. These dispatches, as the one published today indicates, will give authentic first-hand reports of the war that is raging in China and the Chinese Government's policy and action"

In her dispatch carried on the Leader Page, with five single column headings, Madame Chiang began by saying. "Information has reached me today from the Chinese secret service that a serious situation has arisen in Tokyo as a result of several grave and unexpected contingencies, all hinged upon the fact that the stubborn and successful Chinese resistance has overcome Japan's desperate ruthlessness" Referring to communist troops, she said: "I have viewed the Chinese communist troops who are a fine body of well armed sturdy soldiers. I am greatly impressed by their patriotic demonstrations to me" She added "The untrained Chinese labourers are rapidly developing into first class soldiers and giving valuable support to our regular troops. Up-to-date the war in China has set back the progress of the country for 10 years and the material damage will require five years to repair. My carefully organised plans for the improvement of the nation have been tragically ruined and neglected"

The Hindu said Madame Chiang's dispatch was "remarkable for its nobility, bravery and correct appreciation of the military situation. The description of the miserable plight of China's helpless non-combatants who are the victims of Japan's bombings of non-military objectives is simple but telling". The Hindu added: "China may not win big victories but there can be no more peace for the Japanese hordes. She is dealing with a united nation, a loyal countryside and armies well trained in the art of guerilla warfare. It is for the outside world to do its bit to help a brave people in their heroic fight"

On October 29, 1937, The Hindu learnt "with deep concern of serious injury to Madame Chiang Kai-shek. While proceeding from Nanking to Shanghai yesterday the car in which she was travelling overturned and she was thrown 14 feet. The short cable we have received says that she has broken a rib. We must be grateful for small mercies. It is a providential escape for which China and the world will be profoundly thankful".

In her dispatch on October 29 (published on October 30) Madame Chiang said: "I dictate this dispatch resting in bed after the recent motor accident which was not serious. By an irony of fate I nearly met my death by an act of God while the Japanese tried to assassinate me by bombing at the beginning of the war"

As the fall of Nanking to Japanese forces was reported imminent by Reuter on December 11, 1937, The Hindu wrote: "A weak people struggling for independence in the modern world have to shed their blood to win freedom. Where might is right, justice and fairplay unknown and the sympathy of the peoples and Governments of the world sentimental nothings, China will have to rely on the strength of her arms and the unity of her anti-imperialist elements to preserve the integrity of her territories".

The Congress Ministry in Madras faced some hostility both inside and outside the province in October, 1937, following the arrest of S. S. Batliwala,

a Bombay socialist, for a speech in Nellore which the Government said was seditious. The matter was even raised at the All India Congress Committee meeting in Calcutta which C. Rajagopalachari could not attend owing to indisposition. He however said in a speech he took full responsibility for Batliwala's arrest. Rajagopalachari had to face protest demonstrations and criticisms at a number of places which he visited against Batliwala's arrest. The Sessions Judge of Nellore, who tried Batliwala, sentenced him to six months' imprisonment for sedition although the assessors unanimously held him not guilty. The Hindu commenting, on the conviction said: "A charge for sedition, it seems to us, cannot be sustained on the basis of the passages objected to as the Sessions Judge has rightly observed, 'regard must be had to the speech as a whole and the speech should be understood in a fair, free and even a liberal spirit'. It is a perverse, foolish and violent speech but there is nothing in it to support the public prosecutor's view that its object was to rouse a 'spirit of revolt' against the established Government. To our mind therefore the conviction of Mr Batliwala for sedition is unsustainable."

The C. R. Ministry got itself involved in another controversy when it brought forward a bill for relief of indebted agriculturists. The bill provided that payment of outstanding principal should discharge the debt. The Hindu while agreeing on the soundness of the declared objective of the bill, pointed out that in actual working grave anomalies might result. It added: "It is very doubtful whether the agriculturist will find it easy to get loans hereafter on any terms from the sources to which he has hitherto turned and which have responded to his need. . . . The difficulties of the agriculturist may multiply intolerably. . . . The fact that side by side with scaling down no provision is made that would enable the debtor to pay the reduced debt if it is demanded is one of the most serious defects of the measure."

The Hindu daily carried many columns of letters criticising or supporting the bill. The letters were still coming in even after a week. Typical of critical letters was one from Vijayawada by one who signed herself as a widow: "I am a helpless widow crippled by T. B", she wrote, "burdened by two minor children. My husband deposited his savings from year to year with a landlord relative, a gentleman then supposed to be financially sound. He became a victim to the fell disease of T. B. in 1934. Then my debtor is found involved in a debt of about Rs.50,000 to a single banker by standing surety to others who became insolvent. At this stage when the debtor was approached for my dues he pleaded for time until he could eliminate the banker who promised concession on payment of cash. With the heart of a woman I allowed my debtor time till April, 1937 when he settled with the banker. Meanwhile I lived either on the charity of the sanatorium at Madanapalle with the help of relatives or on borrowed money from my husband's friends. Thus my dues have accumulated with my debtor from 1929 until today. He never paid a pie towards interest or principal. He is a small landlord protected by the bill as an agriculturist. . . . Now for all my consideration I have to lose my thrifty savings to a debtor 100 times better off than myself."

Towards the end of July, 1937, M. N. Roy arrived in Madras and received a welcome from radical Congressmen. After addressing meetings in the city he toured the mofussil centres and The Hindu gave generous space to his

utterances It also published a letter from G. S. Arundale, the theosophist leader, who warned of the "disintegrating menace he (M. N. Roy) so dangerously represents". Drawing attention to the fact that Roy denounced "everything that it is at present the fashion to denounce — imperialism, capitalism, tradition, authority, orthodox ideology", Arundale wrote "How degrading it all is, how terrible, how saddening that any Indian should have become so blind to the nature of India's potential pre-eminence in the world, that he fails to see that he is treading upon the glories of his ancient motherland and has no hesitation in reducing her to the level of those lands some of which are her unworthy offspring. India is indeed in danger when some of her sons who are in positions which enable them to have the ear of the unthinking public contemptuously turn their back upon all that has kept India great amidst all countless decades of dominant foreign influence and actually think they are doing her service when without realising what they are doing they proceed to hand her over in bondage to forms most of which are far beneath her dignity to assume, are in deadly opposition to her interests."

A different kind of warning was given by V. S. Srinivasa Sastri in December of the same year when in his convocation address at the Annamalai University he spoke of the tyranny of party discipline which posed a danger to real democracy "In this country", he said, "with every widening of the franchise and of the sphere of popular control, the corruptions of Western Democracy obtain a foothold sooner than its virtues" Dwelling on what he called the "hypotrophy of the party system", he said, "the tendency of party executives is to aggrandise themselves and make continual inroads on the freedom of action and of speech of their members. As in other cases the evil example of one party spreads among all. The reins of party discipline tend to be held with increasing rigour and men and women are told that non-compliance with the fiat of party leaders will be noted in black ink in their records. In the hurry of life we do not remember that by merely joining a party we give up a considerable slice of liberty. The opposition whose business ought to be to expose the flaws of Government measures, but when that task is done, to examine the measures on their merit and support them where they are worthy of support, opposes for the sake of opposition and gets into the habit of seeing nothing right in the operations of Government and never saying a good word of their adversaries. . . . Party politics which forbid independent judgment and compels one to speak and vote at another's bidding is systematised violence done to truth. . . . If it were possible to rid our minds of the competitive aspect of the labours of the various parties, they would seem to be co-ordinate and co-operating agencies employed on the common task of ascertaining and promoting the good of the whole community. A party is subordinate to the nation, must be ready to sacrifice its interests for those of the nation and ought not to claim of the citizen that complete abnegation that only the nation can claim in sore need. On this view how grievously at fault we are in carrying on a ceaseless mutual warfare, on the lookout for ambushes, feints and fights to the finish. If the great religions are to practice the virtues of charity, tolerance and even appreciation towards one another, if races and nations are bidden, in the name of mankind, to pull down all tariff and political barriers, how paltry and childlike seem the squabbles and truceless hostilities of our parties, often with no intelligible distinctions and revolving round personalities".



The Hindu noted that Sastri's remarks were directed against the Congress and added "A voluntary organisation which for 50 years worked with no eye on office and with little chance of securing the power that goes with office can hardly be confounded with those which have long played the political game in other countries . . . It accommodates within itself many shades of political and economic thought which the force of their mutual interaction succeed in evolving a norm of opinion on fundamental issues which reflects broadly the views of the people as a whole. There is little chance of such a body being dominated by a caucus representing an aggressive minority ruthlessly seeking its own ends especially as the goal which the Congress has placed before itself is that of political independence and as a corollary thereto social justice".

On October 15, 1937, The Hindu published a five-year scheme (forerunner of the five year plan of Free India) by Sir M. Visweswarayya, former Dewan of Mysore and noted economist, for planned economic development and rural uplift, the first time anything of the kind to be suggested in India. The Hindu said his "scheme is by no means an impracticably ambitious one" and hoped that the provincial Governments "will give to it the consideration to which it is entitled". Earlier it said the general aim of the scheme was "to find work for the people, to increase by such work production and service and raise income and standard of living and concurrently to advance nation building activities to develop a healthy, capable, self-sufficient and prosperous people". In Visweswarayya's scheme the district was conceived of as the unit of activity.

As the Congress Ministries in the provinces (they were now seven with the addition of the Congress Ministry in North West Frontier Province) sat firmly in their saddle even a confirmed anti-office man like Jawaharlal Nehru was moved to admit in the course of two articles which he wrote for The Hindu that they had "brought a breath of fresh air in the turgid and authoritarian atmosphere of India". But he warned: "And yet our task is infinitely harder, more complex and dangers and difficulties beset us at every step". Declaring that to achieve independence they had to get rid of the new constitution he said the Ministers who function under it "will always think in terms of replacing this by another framed by the Indian people through a constituent Assembly".

Nehru's views were reflected in the Congress Working Committee which meeting in Calcutta in October, 1937 opposed Federation and called upon provincial and local Congress Committees and the people generally as well as the provincial Governments and Ministries to "prevent the imposition of this Federation which will do grave injury to India and tighten the hands which hold her in subjection to the imperialist domination and reaction".

Writing on the same subject The Hindu said: "While the need for an all India Federation is not questioned by any responsible section of opinion, the Congress which represents the largest political party in the country and is now in office in seven out of 11 British Indian provinces is strongly opposed to the Federal Scheme embodied in the Act of 1935 as enthroning Princely reaction in the seat of power. If in the face of this opposition, further concessions should be made to the Princes, while the British Indian criticisms are brushed aside, it does not require much perspicacity to see that the Federation, if at all it comes about will be born in very inauspicious circumstances, it could hardly be expected to usher in the future "full of promise" of which the Viceroy spoke the other day. It would be far better to face the realities and make a fresh

attempt to forge a new constitution for the centre, not on the basis that it should function as a brake on nationalism — which is the *raison d'être* of the present scheme — but with a view to promoting the growth of a dynamic Indian unity while allowing the maximum of freedom to the units to develop along the lines best suited to their genius. If in such negotiations the British Indian provinces are allowed to play their rightful part the chances of their establishing a friendly understanding with the Indian states will be far greater than if they should be dragooned into an arrangement in regard to which they feel that their interests have been sacrificed by the British Government in its desire to make a deal with the Princes”

The Hindu editorial was based on a report from its Bombay Correspondent that the Princes had urged certain amendments to the Act but the India Office had replied that modifications of the Act were not necessary and their objects could best be gained by alterations in the Instrument of Accession. The Correspondent added that the India Office would issue an amended Instrument of Accession which would constitute the last word on the subject. He also said that friendly suggestions had been made that such Indian states as had no representative bodies should establish them at an early date and the Princes should nominate their representatives to the Federal Houses from such institutions.

The first indication of trouble from M. A. Jinnah which was to increase in volume and intensity till partition was given by him in his address as President of the All-India Muslim League in Lucknow in October, 1937. Jinnah attacked the Congress and said the present leadership of the Congress was responsible for “alienating” the Muslims of India more and more by pursuing a policy “which is exclusively Hindu and since they have formed the Governments in six provinces where they are in majority they have by their words and deeds and programme shown more and more that Muslims cannot expect any justice or fairplay at their hands. Wherever they are in a majority and wherever it suited them they refused to co-operate with the Muslim League parties and demanded unconditional surrender and signing of their pledge”.

The Hindu said the speech “reveals the central weakness of Mr. Jinnah’s leadership — lack of positive outlook and constructive policy — and betrays the fear that torments the League that the Congress may by its policy of mass contact win the allegiance of the Muslim masses and thus weaken the hold of communal organisations ... In reality the bitterness of his attack is due to his realisation that the Congress movement to establish mass contact is succeeding. ... The claim that communalists like Mr. Jinnah are the accredited leaders of the Muslim masses and that the permanent interests of the latter will be best subserved by isolating them from other communities is not one that will be granted by progressive minds; in fact it is being vigorously disputed by a considerable section of Muslim intelligentsia itself”.

On January 9, 1938, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, member of the Congress Working Committee, had a prolonged talk in Bombay with Jinnah on the communal question. Perhaps this was the first and last occasion when Jinnah deigned to meet Azad for later as he became more and more dictatorial and belligerent he refused to recognise Azad in any capacity, as Congress President or as a representative Muslim.

Gandhiji tried his hand with Jinnah for the first time (it was to be the first of many more fruitless meetings) when he met the League Leader at his Bombay residence in April, 1938 and was with him for 200 minutes. Reporting the talks, Salivatti said: "The differences between the two communities could not be bridged so soon and it is therefore a foregone conclusion that these two leaders will meet again"

The letters exchanged between Jinnah and Gandhiji and between him and Jawaharlal Nehru which ran to 16 columns in *The Hindu* were published in June. In one of his letters Gandhiji wrote to Jinnah: "In your speeches I miss the old nationalist. When in 1915 I returned from my self-imposed exile in South Africa everybody spoke of you as one of the staunchest nationalists and the hope of both the Hindus and the Muslims. Are you still the same Mr Jinnah! If you say you are, in spite of your speeches I shall accept your word. You want me to come forward with some proposal. What proposal can I make except to ask you on bended knees to be what I thought you were".

The Hindu pointed to the "strong undercurrent of bitterness which some of these letters reveal" and added that no impartial reader of the letters could fail to be struck by the "hostile and unhelpful attitude that Mr. Jinnah unfortunately thought fit to adopt from the beginning towards the Congress move for securing a friendly settlement of the communal question. The correspondence makes it abundantly plain that while the Congress leaders were all along trying to find out what exactly the Muslim League wanted with a view to exploring the possibility of meeting that demand, Mr. Jinnah and his friends were manoeuvring for position; their one anxiety seemed to be to get the Congress to recognise the Muslim League as the one and only representative organisation of the Muslims and by the same token reduce itself to the level of a communal organisation, giving up the claim to speak for the nation as a whole"

The Hindu said, "If the leaders of the Muslim community are unable to take a more reasonable stand than that adopted by Mr. Jinnah, then there seems little prospect of a satisfactory or definite solution of this serious problem"

Before the letters were released Jinnah had met Subhas Bose, the new Congress President in Bombay in May. According to a report published in *The Hindu* the main point in the Congress proposals submitted to Jinnah was that the "Congress wants an unequivocal declaration from the Muslim League that the League is prepared to go the whole hog in the country's fight for freedom, particularly in its opposition to and fight against the proposed Federal scheme, even if the latter meant direct action. If the League is in a position to say 'Yes' to this demand then the Congress will be prepared to agree to all the demands of the League provided they are consistent with nationalism".

Jinnah's reaction apparently was not conciliatory for *The Hindu* wrote on June 7: "Mr. Jinnah's elucidation of the attitude of the Muslim League on the great question of Hindu-Muslim Unity makes one feel that the League is in no mood to approach the problem with zest or earnestness. It seems to be concerned more with strengthening its organisation than achieving communal concord and amity".

Again in another leader in the following month, *The Hindu* wrote. "Enlightened and nationally minded leaders have not been lacking in the Muslim community . . . but it has nevertheless been broadly true that the ferment of nationalism has been very slow in acting on the Muslim mass mind,

partly because of the ignorance and apathy of the people themselves and partly because they have been dominated by men with a medieval outlook and by communalists whose policy of political exclusiveness chimed with the purpose of the ruling power and was actively encouraged by it. But even so the outlook of the Muslim masses has been gradually changing and the Congress policy of direct approach has in the short period it has been in operation stimulated this change. Its influence is to be judged not so much by the numerical increase of Congress adherents in the community — though it has not been negligible — as by the effect it has had on the obscurantist and communalist elements who saw their leadership slipping away from them and have made a violent effort to rally their forces”

A man who felt he had done much towards achieving Hindu-Muslim unity and succeeded in his effort only to be later let down was S. Srinivasa Iyengar, the veteran former Congress President who had chosen voluntary retirement from politics because of his disappointment. Referring to demands that he should re-enter Congress politics, Srinivasa Iyengar said at a public meeting in Madras in December, 1938 that he not only stood for independence for India but also for complete independence. He had lost the key to the lock with which he had sealed his lips. He had not yet felt the urge to search for the key. His mission had been to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. He had succeeded in arriving at a pact (this has been referred to earlier in this chronicle) but it was broken behind his back. That was one of the reasons for his retirement. “I am not a modest man. I admit I did do some little work. But I am not an ambitious man. Leadership does not tempt me. What tempts me is the success of the work I undertake” He said the difficulty arose on account of the mixture of religion and politics. Referring to Indian states he said he was wondering how the Congress was going to achieve complete independence for India with a ring of Indian states which would be the bulwark of a non-national domination around them. The ambiguity of the Congress in the past made the rulers or the Dewans of the States flout the opinion of the people. That Srinivasa Iyengar’s fears in this respect proved true at least in the case of one South Indian state would be seen later in this narrative.

Early in 1938, the Congress Ministries in United Provinces and Bihar resigned because the Governors would not allow them to release political prisoners and a first class political crisis was precipitated. The Hindu said the question was whether Provincial autonomy under which Ministers with a huge popular backing in the country “cannot so much as order the release of a few prisoners without being interfered with is not a mere farce. Once the question is put this way it should be obvious that the Congress is bound to treat it as an all-India issue. The Governor-General should realise the grave implications of such a development and rectify a bad blunder before it is too late”.

The Congress Working Committee criticised the attitude of the Governor-General who had asked the Governors to prevent release of political prisoners and invited him “to reconsider his decision so that the Governors may act constitutionally and accept the advice of their Ministers in the matter of release of political prisoners” Supporting the C.W.C., The Hindu said that the definite unwillingness of the opposition leaders in the two provinces to form Ministries “should convince the authorities that on the issue they have provoked they will not find an iota of sympathy in the country. There could be no greater sign of

weakness than to threaten India with the scrapping of the constitution and the restoration of pure autocracy"

The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow in a statement on February 22, 1938, said: "Neither the Governors nor the Governor-General have any desire or intention of interfering with the legitimate policies of the Congress or any other Government. The action taken in the present case has been designed to safeguard the peace and tranquillity of India and incidentally to uphold the sanctions of law and the orderly functioning of the constitutional Ministry. That action keeps it open to Ministers in consultation with Governors to pursue policies of the release of prisoners. They need anticipate no difficulty now any more than in the past in securing the friendly and ready co-operation of the Governors in the individual examination of cases". The Viceroy hoped that it might be possible shortly to return to normalcy in the two provinces.

The Hindu held that the Viceroy's statement amounted in effect to a withdrawal from the untenable position he took up in interfering in the normal conduct of the administration in U.P. and Bihar, "though in terms it is an attempt to justify that position by reference to general principles which have no application whatever to the present case. It would have been more graceful if the blunder into which he had been led had been frankly acknowledged; but that of course was hardly to be expected, the force of official tradition in India being what it is".

Even as the U.P. and Bihar Ministries resumed office there was another political crisis, this time in Orissa. The Congress Working Committee in April criticised the appointment of an officer of the Orissa Civil Service as acting Governor of that Province and said: "It is difficult for the Ministers to act as Ministers to those who have been their subordinates and who might have fallen into disfavour with them". The Committee requested the Governor-General and the Secretary of State to revise the appointment and suggested the adoption of a convention of appointing Chief Justices as acting Governors.

The Hindu endorsed the C.W.C. suggestion regarding appointment of acting Governors and said: "India has a right to be assured that there is no intention to make appointments to these high offices on racial considerations".

The crisis was ultimately solved by the Governor of Orissa, Sir John Hubback, deciding not to go on leave "in view of the instability of the political situation which he would be bound to leave to his successor". The Hindu said it was a "wise solution of a difficulty which ought not to have been allowed to rise at all".

When the Congress Ministries completed one year in office on July 14, 1938, The Hindu expressed satisfaction. "There is no doubt that the wisdom of the policy of office acceptance has been amply vindicated. Today the people walk with a new strength and self-respect born of the knowledge that the Government is not an alien and sinister force with which it would be best to avoid contact as far as possible, but something in which they have a vital concern and for the right functioning of which they have a real responsibility . . . Even more far reaching in importance is the profound impression that Congress in office has made on Britain and the world opinion"

The Hindu added: "It is nevertheless broadly true to say that the Congress Governments have yet to work out the details of socio-economic programmes the need for which they have envisaged and for the early initiation of which the

people who expect great things of the Congress, are impatient". The Hindu urged "a more steady and systematic survey of the major problems of poverty, disease and ignorance and the working out of definite large scale plans to tackle them".

We have to turn our attention now to the happenings in a south Indian state, Travancore, which brought the Dewan into clash with The Hindu and where the first battle for responsible Government was launched but without initial success. At its Haripura session, the Congress made its attitude to princely states clear. It said it would not launch any agitation for self-Government itself but it would give moral support to the people of the states if they started a movement on their own. "The meaning of the resolution is too plain to be missed", said The Hindu. "The Congress has proclaimed that it has no intention to take any active part in state politics and disowned responsibility for any such activities that may be carried on in future . . . The resolution makes it clear . . . that the Congress still stands 'for the same political, social and economic freedom in the states as the rest of India and considers the states as an integral part of India which cannot be separated'. It stands again for responsible Government and guarantee of civil liberty in the states and is aware of and deplores the lack of freedom and suppression of civil liberties in many of the states. The will to help the people of the states is there but there are practical difficulties. For one thing the Congress cannot hope to tackle at once the problems of all the 600 odd states of India. The conditions in these states vary widely and differ from the rest of India so that the general policy of the Congress is often unsuited to the states . . . . Another consideration which has weighed with the Congress in coming to this decision is the feeling that it should not take upon itself responsibilities which it could not satisfactorily discharge . . . Rather than embark upon activities which in the nature of things must result in discredit to itself and disservice to the states, the Congress thinks — and rightly — that the wiser course is to concentrate attention on the work of winning freedom in British India, success in which is bound to bring freedom to the states' people as well".

With this background it will be easier to follow the events in Travancore. On February 2, 1938, the Dewan, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, told the State Assembly that responsible Government in the real sense of the term was impossible in an Indian state so long as there was no control over the purse by the people or the right to vote funds. Further there were several treaty obligations between rulers of Indian states and the Paramount Power which could not be continued by any other body except the ruler without the consent of the Paramount Power. The introduction of responsible Government would place the ruler of an Indian state in a curious position with regard to the Paramount Power, he added.

It was to be noted that a few weeks earlier the Maharaja of Cochin (an adjacent state) had introduced the first measure of Responsible Government by appointing a Minister responsible to the legislature and to be in charge of development departments, like Agriculture and Medicine.

The Hindu while conceding that what the Travancore Dewan had said was the correct legal and constitutional position added: "But it does not alter the fact that it is open to the Maharaja to concede a very considerable measure of responsible Government consistent with the due discharge of his own

obligations to the Paramount Power and that with the concurrence of the latter even such limitations as may be otherwise necessary to safeguard his capacity to discharge these obligations may be modified, if not altogether removed".

The Hindu pointed out that the Paramount Power far from being opposed would welcome reforms in the states if one should judge from authoritative statements in the past and added: "In the circumstances it is unthinkable that if any state should put forward proposals conceived in a liberal spirit for conferring substantial power on the people the Paramount Power will oppose it, it ought, on the contrary, to applaud and actively assist such a move and the repeated exhortations to the princes by the Viceroy and others in authority to move with the times go to confirm the belief that they will not fail in the elementary duty. It will therefore not do for the Governments of states to put forward their obligations to the Paramount Power as an excuse for not satisfying the legitimate demand of the people for a full and effective voice in the administration".

The Hindu on February 23 noted the statement in the House of Commons of Earl Winterton, Under-Secretary of State for India, that the "Paramount Power would certainly not obstruct proposals for constitutional advance initiated by a ruler" and said the Winterton declaration "shows that if any apprehension is entertained in any quarter that the Paramount Power may place a veto on any constitutional reforms the states may desire to introduce such apprehension is entirely baseless".

The leaders of the Travancore State Congress launched a campaign against the state Government by organising a meeting in Madras to protest against the action of the state Government in prohibiting meetings and legitimate activities of the State Congress. The leaders, Pattom Thanu Pillai and T. M. Verghese, also explained their demand for responsible Government. The Hindu in its issue of April 14 fully reported the proceedings of the meeting running to four columns and in a leading article criticised the Travancore Government for banning meetings organised by the State Congress as indefensible. "No wonder in the circumstances serious charges are made against the Government that they suppress freedom of the Press, freedom of speech and freedom of association and that those whose opinions are not palatable to authority are being terrorised. These charges may be ill or well founded but the Government by banning a legitimate movement have put themselves in the wrong and made it difficult for the public to judge dispassionately and with a full knowledge of all the facts".

In a mild criticism of the action of the Dewan in disallowing an adjournment motion in the State Assembly on the question of responsible Government The Hindu, on July 13, analysed the constitutional and legal issues involved and said: "In view of the fact that the issue of responsible Government is increasingly engaging men's minds in the State and this is responsible directly or indirectly for public movements which are profoundly influencing popular opinion, it seems to us that the Dewan-President took too narrow a view of the scope of rules when he ruled out the adjournment motion as not dealing with a matter of urgent public importance. . . . The advocates of responsible Government have been prevented by the executive ban imposed on the movement from carrying on agitation in its favour by the holding of public meetings etc. If

they are to be prevented now, by an interpretation of the letter of the statute for which there is no reasonable warrant, from raising the question even on the floor of the legislature, constitutional agitation would well nigh become impossible"

The Hindu found the political situation in Travancore showed definite signs of deterioration in August, 1938 "rather than improvement" It noted that while the Government banned the activities of the State Congress it has allowed another organisation, the National Congress, which also worked for responsible Government, freedom to function. "This has inevitably led to the charge that the National Congress which seems mainly to concern itself with discrediting the activities of the State Congress, has come into existence and is functioning with official support".

The Hindu added "If instead of putting forward these thin excuses for an indefensible, because indiscriminate, ban on the exercise of elementary rights, the Government withdraw these orders and set the ordinary criminal law in motion against those who in their view made seditious speeches or carried on illegal activities, the public would be in a position to judge for itself whether and how far the allegations against the State Congress were well founded and there would be little cause for complaint, if those whom the courts found guilty, were punished. It rests with the Government to retrace their steps without delay and lift the ban on freedom of speech and association. They would be taking a very grave moral responsibility if they should hesitate to do this from false notions of prestige"

Apparently The Hindu's wise counsels fell on deaf ears for on August 26, the Travancore Government declared the Travancore State Congress and the All-Travancore Youth League unlawful under the Travancore Criminal Law Amendment Regulation I. This was followed the next day by the arrests and convictions of the State Congress leaders, including Pattom Thanu Pillai and T. M. Verghese, for defiance of prohibitory orders. The Hindu published over three columns of reports of arrests, convictions and protests all over the state.

On September 1, 1938, five persons were killed when state troops opened fire on demonstrators in Neyyatinkara in South Travancore. The Hindu while condemning the violence indulged in by the agitators said: "We would reiterate with all earnestness that the Government have a positive duty in this matter. It is essential that the Government should withdraw the prohibitory orders and restore freedom of speech and association; that is the only sure way of removing bitterness and discontent"

Disturbances broke out in Quilon on September 2 and two persons were killed and many injured when troops fired on a crowd which refused to disperse. Gandhiji in a statement on the Travancore situation said he had come to the conclusion that the Travancore Government "are resorting to repressive methods far in excess of the requirements if there are any", He added: "I have no doubt whatsoever that the case for responsible Government will be strengthened by the frightfulness being committed by the Government of Travancore if only the people will not be demoralised and will continue to adhere to non-violence" He appealed to the Maharaja, Maharani and the Dewan, "to retrace their steps and allow the State Congress to function so long as its activities remain peaceful". Gandhiji said: "The Government may by the



terrible repression they have resorted to succeed in killing the movement for the time being but it will never die and will leave a bitter memory behind"

Following the incidents in various parts of the State, the Travancore State Congress announced on September 4 that there would be no mass meetings organised by the State Congress for some time. The Hindu called the decision "wise" and said it was now upto the Travancore Government to do the right thing by removing the ban on the State Congress and thus enable constitutional activities to be carried on.

Gandhiji in another statement urged the Dewan to declare an amnesty and allow free expression of opinion

Leonard W. Matters cabled from London. "To say that the reports of the repeated shootings in Travancore have caused much concern here is to put it mildly. Uptill quite recently the State enjoyed — and deservedly so — a very high reputation as one of the most advanced, contented and peaceful of the Indian principalities but things have happened there in the past six months to destroy this reputation".

As more arrests and disturbances continued to disfigure Travancore, The Hindu wrote in August: "The situation in Travancore continues to be grave. Every day passed like this makes the chances of a return to the normal more difficult of attainment. . . Nobody can deny to a Government the right to use all its resources in defence of law and order but nobody has yet suggested that a state can successfully do so except by general consent, to put it at its lowest. This general consent can be scarcely postulated in the face of the fact that resistance to the regulations is gaining a steadily growing circle of adherents. . . one of the two courses is open to the Government. They may institute an impartial enquiry as suggested by Gandhiji and take the occasion to disprove, if they can, the bonafides of the state Congress agitation. The other and to our mind the better course, would be straightaway to face the bigger issue of responsible Government as indeed they will have to ultimately. This means the restoration of the *status quo* by the withdrawal of all restrictions on constitutional activities of the State Congress".

The Hindu repeatedly urged the State Government to explore the possibility of conceding the demand for responsible Government. It wrote in October "The rapidity with which the freedom movement has spread in the State, the widespread allegiance which the Congress commands from all classes and sections and the fact that attempts to establish democratic forms of Government have met with some measure of success in some adjacent areas — all these point to the urgent need for the Travancore Government taking steps to explore the possibility of establishing responsible Government within the state. . . . That would be the surest way of restoring harmony in the state and quickening progress".

The Travancore Government partially responded to the appeal by proclaiming amnesty for political prisoners on the occasion of the Maharaja's birthday and also withdrawing the ban on the State Congress and the Youth League. The Hindu welcomed the gesture and urged the State Congress to withdraw the civil disobedience movement. At the same time The Hindu pleaded for an enquiry into the demand for responsible Government.

Writing on November 18 The Hindu said that "whatever might be the ultimate future of the states — there are others besides Mr. Nehru who think a good

number of them have no future — the subjects of the states cannot long be denied the same measure of responsible Government and the same liberties as those in British India enjoy; it would be the part of wisdom for the rulers to concede these and thereby strengthen their position. It is therefore unfortunate that some rulers or their advisers should think that it is not only possible but legitimate to try and play off the Paramount Power against the states subjects and the Indian National Congress."

The Hindu criticised the Travancore State Congress in December for talking of a programme of direct action "to be adopted as and when necessary". "There is no justification whatever for the adoption of such a dangerous policy", it said. It stressed that in the conditions obtaining in Travancore a "programme of direct action is incompatible with the maintenance of that absolute non-violence which the State Congress is anxious to maintain. The State Congress has, we must say, been singularly unwise in lightheartedly advising the people to adopt this dangerous technique. We can only hope that wiser counsels will prevail before any attempt is made to implement this decision". To the Travancore Government it said the question it had to consider "is whether the inauguration of the next stage (full responsible Government) could be safely postponed to an indefinite future in view of the present temper of the people and the spirit of freedom that is in the air in the country at large".

An important development in the Travancore situation was the withdrawal of the personal allegations against the Dewan by the State Congress contained in the memorandum appended to the memorial submitted to the Maharaja by the State Congress. This was done by the State Congress Working Committee on the advice of Gandhiji.

The situation in Travancore was complicated by the sudden failure in June, 1938, of the Travancore National and Quilon Bank, one of the premier banks in the state. A charge made against the Dewan was that he had carried on propaganda against the bank which led to its closure. This the Dewan vehemently denied. Meanwhile Messrs K. M. Eapen and W. T. Anderson, Directors of the Bank, in a telegram to the Viceroy said the Bank had been compelled to close till July 1 and this would mean ruination of more than 100,000 depositors involving two crores of rupees. They urged him to direct the Reserve Bank to take charge of the Bank's assets and also direct stay of proceedings in Travancore. Mammen Mappillai, Chairman of the Bank, urged the Viceroy to order an enquiry into the affairs of the Bank.

The Hindu pointed out that by far the vast majority of the creditors of the bank were in British India. Although the bank's investments might be considerable in Travancore its deposits for the most part had been drawn from the provinces of British India, near and remote, "and it becomes the duty of British Indian authorities to examine, if necessary in consultation with the Travancore authorities, the need to take special measures to secure and protect the assets of the Bank in the interests of British India depositors. . . . It is agreed on all hands that the interests of Travancoreans are small compared with those of British Indians and it is but reasonable that the assets of the institution should be taken over by a British Indian court if, after hearing the bank, the court orders liquidation".

In the following days The Hindu carried extensive reports from a Quilon court of proceedings for winding up the bank and appointing a liquidator. On August 6, the District Judge of Quilon ordered the winding up of the bank on a petition by a creditor who said the bank was unable to pay the debts due to him.

One result of the failure of the Travancore National and Quilon Bank was the prosecution of Mammen Mappillai, Chairman, and other directors of the bank on charges of falsification of accounts and preparation of false balance sheets. The trial began in Trivandrum in July 1939 and The Hindu carried almost verbatim reports daily of the proceedings.

On January 23, 1939, the Travancore State Congress issued an ultimatum to the Government that if its demands were not conceded within six weeks it would launch direct action. The Hindu urged the State Government to set up a reforms committee to go into the question of responsible Government. "There has been enough of threats and counter-threats. What is now wanted is constructive statesmanship on the part of both the Government and the people's leaders."

As the State Congress leaders were arrested in Trivandrum and other parts of the State on March 18, 1939 before they could launch their direct action programme, Gandhiji in a statement advised them not to precipitate civil disobedience movement on March 25 as programmed but to wait for his advice. He added, "The connection between the people of the states and of the so called British India is organic, vital and indissoluble. There is no such connection between the princes who are and who pride themselves on being independent of one another. The common tie between them is that of subservience to the Paramount Power without whose permission, implicit or explicit, they cannot move a blade of grass. But the Paramount Power itself growingly lives on the will of the nation, including the people of the states. If the nation realises that it can develop invincible strength through Truth and Non-violence the Paramount Power will be voluntarily replaced by the power of the People."

It therefore seems to me that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer and those Dewans who think like him are bad advisers of their princes and ill-serve them. The effort to ignore the Congress and Congress workers and to prevent its natural influence working in the States is like that of a child who by the little palm of his right hand tries to stop an on-rushing flood. This attempt to stifle the legitimate aspirations of the people of the states surely sows seeds of bitterness on the one hand between the people of the states and the princes to whom they want to be loyal and on the other between the princes and the Congress which wants to help them if it is allowed to do so".

The wide publicity given by The Hindu to the activities of the Travancore State Congress and the repressive measures adopted by the Government and the unsparing criticism of the Government's misguided policy in the editorial columns were bitterly resented by the Dewan who took the drastic action in September, 1939 of stopping the subscription of the paper by Government departments and officials and also withholding Government advertisements.

The Editor, Kasturi Srinivasan, sent his Chief Reporter, G. K. Vasudeva Aiyer, to Trivandrum to study the situation at first hand and report. Vasudeva Aiyer wrote to the Editor on September 26, 1939: "I am today very much confirmed in my earlier suspicion that the Government through its officials, executive and judicial, are bent upon making things very unpleasant to us here. The

Advocate-General's communication, the judge's references in open court and the Chief Secretary's letter sometime back (the reference is to the extensive reports published in *The Hindu* of defence cross examination of prosecution witnesses in the case against the directors of the Travancore National and Quilon Bank which the Government did not like) are all parts of a prearranged plan for browbeating our representative, based on thoroughgoing hostility to our paper. I put it plainly to the Dewan when I chanced to see him this morning whether my inference of the Government attitude towards *The Hindu* was not correct and he returned an unequivocal answer that today he considered *The Hindu* to be his "greatest adversary". And he added he had come to that conclusion deliberately having regard to our attitude towards him for a long time past. When therefore the head of the administration is soaked with such feeling and speaks as a maniac, it is no wonder, I think, that his minions seek to overreach one another in seizing occasions to demonstrate their hostility. And the Dewan says there was nothing surprising in that and his officials cannot be expected to show any consideration to our correspondent in respect of his errors however trivial or inadvertent they might be."

Vasudeva Aiyer continued "It was clear the Dewan was deeply prejudiced and I felt at one stage of our conversation whether it was worth pursuing it and whether having worked himself to that degree of mental intoxication he would ever be able to shake it off before we parted. He recalled his ancient grievances one of which being that for ten years no report appeared in *The Hindu* of even a single case in which he appeared. I had now to say it was impossible to carry on further discussion about our mutual relationship if he were constantly obsessed with that deep-rooted prejudice and viewed us in that perspective. Sir C. P. toned down soon after and some conversation proceeded in Tamil. Realising that I had certainly not come here for favours but to prepare for a fight, if necessary, Sir C. P., clever as he is, seized the opportunity of suing for peace with you through me. "I am telling you, Mr. Vasudeva Aiyer, unreservedly and without equivocation", he said, "let us forget the past and let us be friends. It is extremely unseemly that we should war against each other. I do not want praise or advertisement. I do not certainly mind criticism of my administrative policies and actions. All I want is that in judging me and my administration you should have before you my side of the case. Adverse comment does not worry me provided I was sure that facts from my side were also before the commentator. So far as news is concerned I am not for suppression. Far be it from me. They should be published after due verification. That is what I ask for. On my side I shall render all facilities for verification of news. I shall direct all my officials here and in the Districts to co-operate with your Correspondents. That is my proposition. Please convey the gist of our conversation to Mr. Srinivasan, let all past misunderstandings perish, let us start on new and true friendship. That is my offer. Even tomorrow or the day after if the response comes I shall have it declared that an understanding has been reached between us and thoroughgoing co-operation should be the order of the day."

Kasturi Srinivasan replying to Vasudeva Aiyer on September 28 said: "The report of your interview with Sir C. P., greatly amused me. If our pursuing a just and impartial policy is felt to be inconvenient to the Dewan of Travancore,

there is no help for it. Of course it is impossible to treat seriously the hysterical charge that *The Hindu* has been deliberately banning reports of cases in which Sir C.P. had appeared during the last 10 years or the equally untrue statement that in any matter the point of view of the Government has been denied publicity."

When Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer went to Simla he met Shiva Rao and his relations with *The Hindu* came up in the course of conversation. "He complained", Shiva Rao wrote to his boss on December 6, 1939, "that *The Hindu* has not been friendly to him and that statements on behalf of the Travancore Government did not receive the same publicity as the criticisms. He seemed anxious to find a way of improving the present relationship. I told him that the best thing would be for him to get into direct touch with you and have a frank talk". Kasturi Srinivasan wrote back that Shiva Rao was "not the first person to whom he (the Dewan) has made these overtures". Short of formally banning the entry of *The Hindu* into Travancore, the Dewan had done everything to prevent people in Travancore from subscribing to or advertising in it. "I really cannot understand him", Kasturi Srinivasan said. "The fact is he wants *The Hindu* to put the telescope to the blind eye when it is a question of criticising the Travancore administration. Obviously, *The Hindu* cannot do that".

In the latter half of 1938, Kasturi Srinivasan was in London and he had a long talk with Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India. He gave details of the conversation in a letter to his brother Kasturi Gopalan. "Today I had quite a long interview with Lord Zetland", he wrote on June 30, 1938. "He said that he read *The Hindu* very carefully and that he admired it very much and incidentally made enquiries into the history of our family. He then told me that he was highly gratified to see that provincial autonomy was being worked with great success and in Madras we have a strong Ministry with such a capable man as C. R. at the head. He began to argue that similarly if the people of India agree to work the Central Government as well, they will find no obstacles being placed in their way etc. I immediately told him that the successful working of the provinces proved definitely that the apprehensions, if they were genuine, entertained by the British about the capacity of Indians to manage their affairs were proved to be entirely baseless and the British Government ought to listen to the demands of the Indian Ministers to amend the Government of India Act in the Federal sphere. He said: 'What does it matter if the Act is not changed while we are prepared to find out methods by which all the criticisms advanced against it are met in actual working?' As regards the princes and the Federation he was quite frank and said that an approach to the princes has already been made and it should not be long before a definite move is taken. I cut in to ask: 'will you be prepared to tell them that you will not brook unnecessary delay and if they don't feel like coming in, you would proceed to make other arrangements?' 'Yes', he replied, 'though we would put it more politely. But it would be foolish on their part if any of them showed any reluctance to come into line'. In fact, he said, the Viceroy does not anticipate any difficulty on that score".

Kasturi Srinivasan also mentioned in his letter a visit to Jawaharlal Nehru who was then in London. "I saw Jawaharlal on Tuesday at his residence but he was as usual very formal and uncommunicative and I left him after a few minutes' conversation on unessentials though he desired to see the issues of

The Hindu for getting himself posted up with the latest news from India His prejudice against us is very deep”.

In a letter to Shiva Rao from Madras after his return from England on August 22, Kasturi Srinivasan wrote: “I met a number of people in London, like Lords Lothian, Samuel, and Zetland, Mr. Dawson of the Times and had discussions with them on the political situation. . . The general impression I got was that there is a realisation on the part of H M 's Government that they cannot afford to put off the Indian demands indefinitely if only in view of the international situation. While they may not go to the extent of amending the Act, I do think they will stretch a point to meet the Congress half way When I left London, the Viceroy was busy at the India Office every day and I would not be surprised at all if they are devising a method of approach”

Shiva Rao was able to confirm that the Viceroy was indeed very anxious to bring in Federation and he was concerned about the attitude of the princes Writing to Kasturi Srinivasan on November 15, 1938 after he had an interview with Lord Linlithgow, Shiva Rao said: “I saw H. E. this morning for about half an hour. For practically the whole time we talked about Federation, the states, the movement for responsible Government etc He asked me what Gandhiji's views were on Federation I told him that while I had not discussed the matter with him I had heard during his last visit to Delhi at the end of September that he was keen on elections from the States. H E said he himself had recommended a compromise on this question, election of a panel of suitable persons and nomination out of the panel by the rulers He hoped this compromise would be acceptable to both sides He asked me if the movement for responsibility in the states was really strong I told him that it was inconceivable that the people in the states like Travancore, Mysore and Baroda could be content with anything less than what the people in British India enjoyed He said he quite appreciated the desire but only regretted their methods. I told him that sooner or later every state was bound to concede the principle of responsible Government by stages and there could be no other way out H.E. asked me whether in my opinion the inauguration of Provincial Autonomy had made any difference to the princes, did it frighten them or bring them nearer to Federation? I replied that from what I have heard from some of the representatives of the states they were rather apprehensive about the future H E. said no Viceroy could allow the states to continue to live in the past without moving forward He said he was going to do his utmost to hasten Federation because on the organic unity of India depended not only internal security but safety from external aggression. He was fully conscious of the difficulties and quite prepared for a somewhat rough time. But he hoped there would be sufficient good sense in India to prevent a major crisis on this question. He also talked about the Pakistan movement and regretted that quite a number of Muslims in very high places had secret sympathies with it He said he was going to prevent its spread but without a positive solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem it was inevitable that some of the Muslim Leaguers should cling to the Pakistani idea”

Shiva Rao, as we shall see, met the Viceroy many more times in later years and Lord Linlithgow also met Kasturi Srinivasan quite often. In another letter Shiva Rao told the Editor. “It seems the Viceroy remarked to some one that he enjoyed reading The Hindu at Ootacamund (which he visited when he came

down south earlier in the year) and that the leading articles seemed to him to maintain a very high quality".

In a dispatch from Simla on August 26, 1939, Shiva Rao revealed a difference of opinion between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State on the question of approach to be made to the Congress in regard to inauguration of Federation. "Simla affects complete ignorance of the persistent rumours regarding the serious differences of opinion between the Marquis of Zetland and the Marquis of Linlithgow as to the extent to which efforts should be made to win over the Congress to an acceptance of the Federal scheme. The Secretary of State expressed his opinion immediately after his interview with Mr Bhulabhai Desai in London in his speech at the Bombay Dinner which the Manchester Guardian characterised as in the "Take it or leave it" spirit. Some of the biggest states, it is believed, have expressed apprehensions that any insistence on or even a suggestion of, the introduction of the elective principle from outside would have unfortunate reactions within the states and while they realise the inevitability of reform, they desire that the initiative must be left entirely to themselves. Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, is credited with the view that without this element of popular Government in the states, the Federal scheme is not worth looking at. Lord Linlithgow after his experience of a year's working of the new constitution has come round, if reports are to be believed, to entertaining the Congress standpoint as one of the major factors of the situation. Whether the Cabinet as a whole will back the Secretary of State or the Viceroy remains to be seen".

The Hindu wrote in October, 1939, in a comment on a London Times' editorial on the princes and the Federation that "India objects to Federation not merely or even chiefly on the ground that the states are irresponsible autocracies but because 'central responsibility' under the Federal scheme embodied in the constitution is a myth. A federation in order to be acceptable to Indian opinion should confer full responsibility on the people for the entire conduct of Indian affairs including defence. Foolish indeed would be those states which refused to enter a Federation so constituted on terms regarding the internal reorganisation of these states which would be acceptable to progressive opinion both in the states and British India. If the states agree to federate well and good. If they will not the political progress of British India cannot be stayed on that account. . . . If therefore the states refuse to make such internal changes as would make their entry into the Federation acceptable to Indian opinion, Britain will have to take up the alternative of a fully self-governing Federation of the British provinces alone. Once such a Federation is constituted its pull will be so tremendous that the states which had hesitated about entering it would be only too glad to do so. One thing must be clearly understood that India will not be put off from pressing for the Swaraj that is her due by the excuse that the states stand in the way".

As the prospects of the States joining the Federation receded in the following months, The Hindu was to repeat this demand, that British India be given full self-Government and constituted into a Federation.

**W**HILE THE situation in India in 1938 was none too good, the international situation was far worse and the philosophy of might is right was in action in Europe. On March 11, 1938, the Austrian Chancellor, Dr Schuschnigg announced in Vienna that he had yielded to force and resigned following an ultimatum by the Nazis. A new Nazi Government was formed in Austria with Dr. Seyss-Inquart as Chancellor. At the same time German troops marched into Austria from several points. The Hindu said Hitler's annexation of Austria "is only the prelude to the great dream of European domination. At a moment's notice without any provocation except the dictator's ambitions, the Nazis have struck in utter disregard of all canons of decency in international relations. But it is in the use of the method of force that we see the danger to the future of peace. What is there to prevent Hitler from striking next at Czechoslovakia where also there are three and a half million Germans yearning to be united with Greater Germany? The Czechs will no doubt resist unlike the Austrians but whether the Soviet and French pacts of mutual assistance will be as effective as they have been considered to be all these days remains to be seen. The guarantees about the 'integrity of Czechoslovakia' may be useless to the Czech people as they have been to the Austrians"

Featuring the story of the rape of Austria The Hindu reproduced a Punch cartoon showing Hitler carrying a shot deer, marked "Austrian integrity" from a reserved forest and Mussolini telling him "All right, Adolf — I never heard a shot". The cartoon had the caption. Good hunting

"The German annexation of Austria has brought Europe and the world nearer a general catastrophe", said The Hindu which added that it had increased "European tension, suspicion and fear. No nation feels secure any longer"

As the crisis in Czechoslovakia, which was next on Hitler's list, mounted, provoked by the aggressive acts of Sudetans egged on by the Nazis, The Hindu wrote on August 27: "Prague still remains the danger spot in Europe and the excitement over the negotiations between the Czechs and the minorities has grown in the last few days ... But the danger in the Czech situation arises from the fact that the dispute between the Czechs and the Sudetans is only one aspect of the wider struggle for power in Europe. Behind the Sudetans is Herr Hitler in whose hands lies ultimately the decision for peace or war. From what



has happened in the last 10 days, it does not look as if Germany intends to adopt any soft methods. Unless Germany realises that she will meet with prompt retaliation from the Powers the situation may develop dangerously. As always the Czech problem is truly European and an explosion between Germans and Czechs may lead to a general conflagration."

The Hindu considered Neville Chamberlain's (British Premier) air dash to meet Hitler at Berchtesgaden in connection with the Czech crisis "as a praiseworthy gesture which will rank as one of the most remarkable episodes in modern times". And when Chamberlain betrayed the Czechs in his talks with Hitler, The Hindu wrote (On August 22, 1938) "Mr. Neville Chamberlain is neither a Pitt nor a Palmerston. Nor is Britain today the supreme arbiter of Europe's destinies that she was in the 18th and 19th centuries. Today hers is not the commanding voice. In the last six years particularly her policy has been at the sacrifice of the principles of fair dealing and treaty obligations. But few could have expected that the British Prime Minister would so completely betray the Czechs and leave them to the tender mercies of the advancing Nazi Octopus. Last Thursday when Mr. Chamberlain made the dramatic decision to visit Hitler he had the good wishes of the whole world because there was some hope — in spite of the misgivings based on the lessons of the Government's past record — that he might procure peace and an honourable settlement. Today when he meets the Fuehrer for the second time the world watches sullen and disinterested. The worst has happened."

For over two weeks after the Czech crisis began The Hindu reserved its leader and telegram pages for crisis stories from Berlin, Prague and London and other European capitals. Hitler's speeches as cabled by Reuter were featured in full with a multiplicity of headings. The London Correspondent cabled daily on developments in London and what the British Press said and thought. On September 29, The Hindu brought out a special supplement carrying the Prime Minister's statement in the Commons on the Czech crisis.

Another special two-page supplement was published on September 30 announcing the Munich conference decisions. The Hindu's comment on the Munich sell out was: "There can be little doubt that the price paid to preserve peace will be found to be high". The Hindu said: "There is nothing honourable in the treatment which Britain and France meted out to Czechoslovakia. Nor have their own honour and prestige been enhanced by successive trucking to the Fuehrer. The world admires many things that Mr. Chamberlain has done in the last two weeks. His high courage, his disregard of conventions, his unceasing efforts to avoid war even when the situation seemed hopeless will be commended everywhere. But let it not be claimed that he has achieved either an honourable or a lasting settlement".

And when Hitler wiped out Czechoslovakia from the map of Europe in March, 1939, The Hindu quoted his words to show his technique. Hitler had said. "I should not like to follow Sgr. Mussolini who goes and makes his preparation for months and months and tells everybody that he is going to do it. I should strike suddenly without warning with maximum strength and then see what happened. That is what I should do". The Hindu said: "How correctly have these words of the German Chancellor uttered three years ago represented his methods! While the Duce has been struggling in the Spanish peninsula for three long years with the prospect of gaining nothing out of it,

Herr Hitler has in less than 18 months become the master of Central Europe without engaging in a single battle . . . The Fuehrer knows neither pity nor fairplay; he cares little for the plighted word. He marches straight to his imperialist goal and because this little state (Czechoslovakia) stands in his way, he has dealt with it ruthlessly. The Czech state has been dismembered, its democracy destroyed, its rich territory overrun and doubtless its many people will soon be bent to serve the purposes of German imperialism”

In another editorial *The Hindu* warned. “Unless the Democracies are going to act quickly they will lay themselves open to further reverses. Germany must be made to feel the weight of democratic displeasure and disapproval. They must make it clear that they cannot recognise the new protectorate and they must withdraw their diplomatic representatives at once. Obviously, they cannot allow Germany to move among free peoples so long as her regime violates all decencies of international relations. Russia’s immense power and staunch loyalty to anti-war ideals should be utilised by the Western Powers for the furtherance of peace. These are urgent tasks”.

This was the period when *The Hindu* carried the maximum foreign news and articles and cartoons (Low and Punch). The first Low cartoon was published on January 8, 1938. It was captioned “Choked stream” and it showed the stream of world trade choked by guns and armaments. And as though to explain what the cartoon was about although there was no reference to it, a sub-leader under the heading, “arms race” said: “Almost every country in the world has been rearming during the last three years and the only difference lies in the degree and extent of such rearmament. War preparations of this magnitude have an immense influence not only on the political but on the economic life of the world” *The Hindu* entered into a special arrangement with the *Manchester Guardian* for reproduction of its articles and among the notable writers who found their way into its columns were Trotsky (who wrote on the Russian political trials), Edgar Ansel Mowrer, H. N. Brailsford and H. R. Knickerbocker.

*The Hindu* got into minor trouble with school teachers when in March, 1938, it commented in a lighter vein on a school boy’s prank in Bengal under the heading, “The Cactus Touch”. The editorial note referred to a prank played on a teacher in Bengal by students in the class room when they placed a cactus on his seat. Not knowing this when the teacher sat on it he felt a prickly sensation and added to his discomfort the chair collapsed under his weight and he fell down. A magistrate dismissed his complaint against the students with the advice he should not harass them any more, an advice which the leader writer shared. The following day *The Hindu* published a letter of protest from the Headmaster of a high school near Madras who was also president of the Teachers’ Association. “The teachers as a body feel”, he wrote, “that the whole article is conceived in a spirit of malicious ridicule and that the language used throughout is in keeping with that spirit. . . . The incident by itself happening in distant Calcutta is very trivial and does not deserve mention even in the news column. That you should have thought of giving it undue prominence by writing a leader on it makes their resentment keener. Teachers in schools have a hard time and such articles as these, especially from a most responsible and widely circulated newspaper as yours, not only belittle them, but act as a further incentive to mischief on the part of young misguided pupils

As a protest against the article the teachers of this High School with great reluctance have decided to stop subscribing to your paper from today".

The Hindu added a word of explanation to the letter "In publishing the letter may we in all seriousness suggest that our Correspondent is less than just to his great profession which has all through history been noted for its keen sense of humour as well as for its unfailing humanity"

In a letter to the Editor the next day, a reader, Thelma Woods from Madras, said. "Cactus, nails, pins and even gum on a teacher's chair have for innumerable years been the mischievous pranks of school boys and I as a girl student will not hesitate from saying that we played the same pranks Invariably these pranks were treated as jokes and the teacher, the victim of the prank, no doubt scolded the offenders but always in the end treated the whole affair as a huge joke. These little pranks have very often created a closer understanding between teacher and student as very often this "prank" of inserting a cactus in the teacher's seat, gave the pupils an insight into their new master's sense of humour"

On June 14, 1938, The Hindu published a special feature to mark the inauguration of All India Radio station in Madras In an article in it the Controller of Broadcasting, Lionel Fielden, wrote about the future of Carnatic music which seems prophetic In his article which was in the form of a letter to the Station Director, Madras in 2500 A.D., Fielden wrote. "I fear that in your day Indian music as we know it will have been forgotten. I can only say that we are doing our best to save it The impact of the West in our time is strong enough to make it clear that the younger generation is drifting into an easy acceptance of Western harmonies and moving away from the static and intricate melodies — often far too prolonged — of their own tradition It seems that if Indian music is not to be drowned by the clangours of jazz, the addition of harmony — or at any rate some growth and progress in that direction — is essential. I do not mean by this that there is any failure to recognise the inherent beauty and individualism of Indian classical music and the inestimable value of its freedom in improvisation The trouble is that the Sangit Vidwans refuse to accept the necessity for any measure of adaptation and persist in their contention that Indian music has already reached perfection Acrobatic feats of the larynx, no matter what the quality of voice, are accepted as sufficient indications of a perfected art. In these days of mechanical reproduction and rapid communication the musical language of four continents cannot but exercise considerable pressure on the fifth and while Indian classicists still insist on long performances — stretching even to three hours for a single musician — and ignore the necessity of proper voice production, the youth of India is in danger of forgetting its own musical language altogether"

A frequent contributor to The Hindu was Dr R. Nagaraja Sarma who wrote on Hindu philosophy, Hindu seers and saints some of which were controversial and elicited numerous letters to the Editor for and against. In one of his articles he dwelt on the songs of Purandra Dasa which were sung frequently by South Indian musicians His complaint was that "even star singers fail to utter and pronounce distinctly terms used in classic musical compositions with the result that the salutary psychological effect intended to be produced after an assimilation of the meaning of the pieces sung happens to be totally absent. Compositions like those of Purandra Dasa closely packed with mystic meaning, moral message, excellence of ethical endeavour have to be sung with

unfailing understanding of the import and sense of the expression used as otherwise the didactic element will remain stifled"

The Hindu did a very unusual thing on July 30, 1938 when it paid a birthday tribute to Henry Ford in its news columns. There was a picture of Ford, who was celebrating his 75th birthday, and this tribute "Today Mr. Henry Ford, the American 'Auto Moghul' celebrates his 75th birthday. Years ago he swore to have a car at every doorstep in the world. And his output to date of about 26 million vehicles shows that he might well carry out his threat. He is a thorough optimist whose will to do better and better may forge stranger and more striking ways in improved industrial production and distribution". After detailing his life story, The Hindu concluded: "We wish him many, many happy returns of this his birthday."

The Hindu came out in favour of the abolition of titles, which it called an "anachronism" when it supported the Bombay Assembly's resolution in January, 1938, calling for the abolition of titles. "The simple truth is", it wrote, "that these titular distinctions are clearly an anachronism. Even in a country so firmly attached to forms and precedents and social distinctions as is England for instance the advocates of titular honours are now very much on the defensive, partly because such distinctions are repugnant to the democratic spirit and even more because of the grave and frequent scandals connected with sale of honours. Since these titular honours are not much valued for their own sake there should be no great difficulty in dropping them. There is too much class consciousness and snobbery as it is; we do not need to add to them".

This is a very far cry from the days when The Hindu meticulously analysed and held an inquest on every honours list, finding fault with names omitted and congratulating the chosen few who richly deserved the accolade. The Hindu, however, knew that the titles were conferred not always on merit and it shared with its readers in March, 1914, what a correspondent from India had written to The Times on the misuse of titles. "In India today", he wrote, "there is a widespread and justifiable belief that the foundation of honour can be tapped at a price. Some Indians hold titles which are the well-earned reward of long and honourable service, but others owe their dignities to nothing but a long purse".

A young Indian civilian who later distinguished himself both as an official and as a short story writer and poet (his short stories were a regular feature of The Hindu) was the hero of an incident which created a sensation in Palghat and whose reverberations found expression in the columns of The Hindu for many days.

On January 11, 1939, the Palghat Correspondent reported: "Sensation prevails in Palghat following the demolition of the entertainment pandal put up at the Ram Dhyani Matom in Kalpathy Agraharam on the order of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Palghat. The pandal had been put up in connection with the Sri Thyagaraja festival which commenced yesterday".

The Correspondent added that on invitation S. K. Chettur, I.C.S., Sub-Collector with Mrs. Chettur and another friend had attended the music performance the previous day. A few minutes after arrival Mr. Chettur and his friend were found smoking. A boy, who was present, asked them not to smoke, in that assembly. Mr. Chettur continued to smoke while his friend desisted.

There were cries from several among the audience objecting to the smoking Mr Chettur thereupon left the place with his wife and friend, but before he left he wanted to meet the boy who objected to his smoking but the boy declined to see the Sub-Collector. The next day in the afternoon police officials came on the scene and told the organisers that the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (Mr Chettur) had ordered that the entertainment pandal for which the organisers had the Municipal authorities' permission should be demolished before 4 p.m. The organisers rushed to Mr Chettur and offered their "sincere regrets" for the incident but they could not persuade him to rescind his order. The pandal was dismantled by the organisers as demanded.

On January 14, a memorial on behalf of the citizens of Palghat was submitted to the Prime Minister (as the Chief Minister of a province was then designated) on the incident. It was stated in the course of the memorial "The Sub-Divisional Officer (Mr Chettur) did not attend the function in his official capacity. He was there as an influential member of society. The smoking he indulged in was repugnant to the sentiments of the people gathered there and amounted to a failure to respect the solemnity of the occasion. The young man who requested the S D O to desist from smoking couched the request in proper words and he was observing the courtesy of a salutation with folded hands. No offence could have been taken by Mr S K Chettur at the request. That he wanted to persist in incivility and irreverence was clear from his continuing to smoke in spite of the request. His returning to the gathering after he left it and making his way through the crowd and peremptorily calling out to the young man to come out and apologise were the worst aspects of his behaviour. What Mr Chettur did on the morrow of the 10th shows his conduct in a worse light. He directed the police officers to carry out the dismantling of the pandal that was put up as usual in front of the matom where the music parties were held. He quartered quite a large number of constables and police officers including the C I D. to strike terror in the hearts of the people who had gathered there to hear the music that was programmed for the day".

The Hindu also carried a statement which ran to two columns, by nine prominent citizens of the place describing what took place and criticising Mr Chettur's behaviour. A sequel to the incident was the registration of a police case against the principal organisers of the festival for putting up a pandal in the public street and "obstructing traffic".

In January, 1939, the Congress organisation was rocked by a controversy over the election of its president, which was virtually a struggle between the rightists and the leftists. The controversy flared up when Subhas Bose announced his decision to seek re-election and to oppose Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya who was said to be Gandhiji's candidate and supported by influential members of the Working Committee. Subhas Bose had said in a statement, "The Presidential election is wholly an affair of the delegates and should be left to them. Let the Right wing who are in a decided majority in the Congress make a gesture to the left wing by accepting a leftist candidate even at this late hour". The Hindu stoutly opposed Bose's election. It said that "the Congress covers a considerable variety of opinion on socio-economic questions, representing as it does all sections of nationalists who are held together by the bond of devotion to the country and who work for the common purpose of achieving her freedom. The progressive sharpening of the anti-imperialist

struggle makes it all the more necessary that the national character of the great organisation should be maintained intact whereas if Mr Subhas Bose's ideas were to find acceptance it would be reduced to the status of a mere party"

Supporting Dr. Pattabhi's candidature, *The Hindu* said. "We would earnestly suggest to Mr. Bose that it would be graceful as well as statesmanlike for him to withdraw his candidature and allow Dr. Pattabhi to be unanimously elected"

Subhas Bose was however re-elected Congress President on January 30, 1939, by a majority of 203 votes against Dr. Pattabhi. *The Hindu* accepted the verdict and said "Whatever may be the differences of opinion on secondary issues the country will not encourage the airing of those differences to the distraction of attention from the primary aim of winning and placing freedom on unshakable basis. Mr. Bose's categorical "no" to questions which seek to suggest that the Congress is breaking up should set interested speculation at rest"

Gandhiji's reaction was different. He said in a statement that Bose's election was more his defeat than that of Dr. Pattabhi since he was instrumental in inducing Dr. Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate. "And I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy. Therefore it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for which I stand". He added that the minority in the Congress if they could not keep pace with Mr. Bose's policy must come out of the Congress. "The minority may not obstruct on any account. They must abstain if they cannot co-operate. I must remind all Congressmen that those who being Congressmen remain outside it by design represent it most. Those, therefore who feel uncomfortable in being in the Congress may come out, not in a spirit of ill-will but with the deliberate purpose of rendering more effective service"

Replying to Gandhiji's statement Bose said "Leftists will not take the responsibility of creating a split within the Congress. If a split does come it will come not because of them but in spite of them". He hoped there would be no occasion "now or in the near future for the so called minority party to non-co-operate with the so called majority party". He added he would endeavour to "try and win Gandhiji's confidence for the simple reason that it will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's greatest man".

Salivatti from Bombay said in a dispatch. "The rightists feel that instead of subjecting themselves to pinpricks at the hands of the leftists the better course for them will be to hand over charge to Mr. Bose and his group and let them pursue their policy unobstructed by other forces. The suggestion that the two wings might work in combination and present a united front does not appeal to the rightists as the difference between the two wings is one of ideologies. The Working Committee must be a homogeneous body, all members thereof thinking and acting alike and Mr. Bose, the right wing leaders say, must be left to choose for his cabinet men of his way of thinking exclusively. The rightist leaders think Mr. Bose has fought his election on a programme quite different from the one pursued hitherto by the Working Committee. One thing seems clear; if Mr. Bose's programme is accepted the present Congress High Command will retire from Parliamentary work as well as from the Congress Parliamentary executive"

The Hindu said Bose's statement was hardly calculated to reassure the country. Pointing out that the programme outlined by Bose indicated no departure from the programme with which the leftists had identified themselves so far and which the Congress so far had not accepted, it said Bose's statement "nowhere suggests any desire or readiness on his part to make any modifications in that programme in order to carry rightist opinion with him and maintain the unity of the national organisation . . . In other words Mr Bose will try to give a new orientation to the Congress policy and programme which those who have hitherto been in charge of the organisation have not been prepared to agree to . . . Since the delegates are primarily responsible for the present situation it is for them to make it plain at the plenary session whether in choosing Mr Bose they voted for a leftist policy and programme and further whether they are prepared to reject the present policy and censure those, with Mahatma Gandhi at their head, who were responsible for it. With plenty of time before them to consider the issues thus raised, we have little doubt what the result will be".

On February 8, Salvatti reported from Bombay that rightist leaders in the Congress Working Committee had tendered their resignations to Subhas Bose in order to give him a free hand to formulate his policy and programme and choose his Working Committee. The talks between Gandhiji and Bose at Wardha on February 20 did not change the situation. "Gandhiji was all sweetness to Bose", said the Hindu Correspondent, "but he did not budge from the statement he issued the day after the presidential election. The chances of a 'united front' cabinet for the new President are very remote indeed though there are those who believe that Mr. Nehru may be prevailed upon to influence Gandhiji to relax his attitude".

The Wardha Correspondent said in a dispatch on February 22 that all the members of the Working Committee except President Bose and Sarat Bose numbering 13 had decided to resign from the Committee and indicated they would not be available for renomination during Mr. Bose's term. "It is felt by Congressmen present here that Mr. Nehru's decision to withdraw from the Working Committee would prove too strong a dose for Mr. Bose and that the latter would realise the gravity of the situation". Mr. Nehru, who according to the Correspondent, acted independently of the other rightist members and wrote a separate letter of resignation to Mr. Bose, felt that Mr. Bose had not accepted his advice to express regret publicly and withdraw the unfounded charges that he had made against his colleagues on the Working Committee on the eve of the presidential election. "He also came to the conclusion that no programme other than the one that was being followed now under Gandhiji's guidance could be followed in the present circumstances," the correspondent said.

In their joint letter of resignation sent to Bose, 12 members of the Working Committee said: "We feel the time has come when the country should have a clear cut policy not based on compromise between different incompatible groups of the Congress. It is but right therefore that you should select a homogeneous cabinet representing the views of the majority. You must trust us to give you all possible co-operation in matters where we see eye to eye with you in the policies that you may put before the country". Describing the scene at Wardha, The Hindu Correspondent quoted Nehru as exclaiming to him:

"I take it that the Congress Working Committee is dead. Long live the Working Committee" Nehru added: "I reached an analogous conclusion to the one arrived at by my 12 esteemed colleagues but on different grounds"

The Hindu went hammer and tongs at Subhas Bose and called upon the delegates to the Congress session to disown his leadership. The Hindu said the decision to force a contest for the presidentship was not taken from broad considerations of national interest but was actuated by the motive of sectional advantage or personal prestige. "This conclusion is only strengthened by Mr. Bose's conduct in casting grave aspersions on the integrity of universally trusted and respected leaders before the contest, aspersions which he has not seen fit to withdraw. The country and the delegates to the Congress in plenary session assembled will therefore have to consider carefully all the implications of accepting Mr. Bose's leadership in the present circumstances. There is the major fact that Gandhiji and all the veteran leaders who have fought by his side for years are definitely of the opinion that Mr. Bose's leadership will be harmful to the best interests of the country. Our people know these leaders too well to believe that such a condemnation could be the result of personal pique. And we must state it as our own opinion that there are solid grounds for their attitude. The delegates to the Congress if they will bear in mind that the strength of the nation can be effective only if it is disciplined and ordered strength, can have no difficulty in repairing their blunder in electing Mr. Bose as President, for blunder it was in the existing circumstances notwithstanding Mr. Bose's great services and sacrifices"

Even as it was announced from Calcutta that Bose had accepted the resignation of the 12 rightist members of the Working Committee, The Hindu urged a vote of confidence in the President must be sought from the delegates. "As serious doubts have been raised as to what might be the real attitude of the general body of Congressmen it is essential that the delegates assembled in plenary session at Tripuri should have an opportunity of unambiguously declaring whether they have confidence in Gandhiji's leadership — for really it comes to that — or in Mr. Bose's. If the President will not take the responsibility of inviting a straight vote on the question the members of the old Working Committee must take it upon themselves to secure such a verdict. This is the least they owe the country."

The Hindu added "It is becoming increasingly plain that Mr. Bose has no original contribution to make to Congress plans and policy and that the country will not stand to gain by accepting his leadership when that involves foregoing the guidance of tried and trusted leaders who have never failed her"

The climax in the dispute between Bose and the Rightists was reached when the Subjects Committee of the Tripuri Congress (over which Subhas Bose presided) adopted on March 10, 1939 by 218 votes to 135 Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant's resolution expressing confidence in Gandhiji, deploring aspersions cast on members of the Working Committee and calling for adherence to present policy of the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru and 12 other members of the old Working Committee remained neutral.

The Hindu hoped that "despite the fulminations some of them (Bose's supporters) are indulging in at the present moment that Mr. Bose himself will see his way to accept and loyally to work out the policy that the Subjects Committee had laid down" The Hindu wrote that the Tripuri Congress session had demonstrated that "Gandhiji's leadership and moral authority remain as



unshaken as ever Notwithstanding the ripples on the surface created by the controversy over the presidential election, the general impression that the 52nd session of the Congress will leave on the mind of the dispassionate observer is that the great organisation has ranged behind it all the mighty forces making for progress and that it is today a more efficient and practical instrument for shaping the nation's destiny than it has ever been"

Subhas Bose resigned the Presidentship of the Congress on April 29 following failure of his talks with Gandhiji on the composition of the Working Committee The resignation was announced on the eve of the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Calcutta.

The Hindu welcomed Bose's resignation and the choice of Dr Rajendra Prasad to succeed him "Once Mr. Bose had accepted the directive of the Tripuri Congress that he should appoint his Working Committee in consultation with Gandhiji and with the latter's whole-hearted approval, it should have been plain to him that he would have to reappoint the old Working Committee in its entirety"

Subhas Bose announced on May 3 the formation of the Forward Bloc within the Congress and his action was criticised by The Hindu which wrote: "The move to form a left bloc is so obviously the work of a disgruntled element that the general public will have no difficulty in sizing it up correctly". The Hindu thought the new group was likely "to bear a more striking resemblance to the organisation of the Russian Communist Party than to those democratic organisations which are broad based on popular support and in which there are stratified hierarchies". Referring to Bose's proposal to appoint a committee to conduct investigation in camera into the affairs of Congress Ministries it said it is "uncomfortably suggestive of the methods of OGPU" It added: "A Forward Bloc which favours these methods is not likely to commend itself to any considerable section of the great national organisation whose strength is in its simple faith in democracy".

Subhas Bose more and more figured in the news as a Congress rebel. First he proposed to hold protest meetings against two resolutions of the A. I. C. C. pertaining to criticism of Congress Ministries and discipline in the Congress The Congress President and Nehru warned him against breaking discipline in the party. The Hindu also criticised him Bose issued a statement condemning the prohibition policy of the Congress Ministry in Bombay and Gandhiji was provoked to issue a statement criticising his attitude

On August 11, 1939, the Congress Working Committee took disciplinary action against Subhas Bose and debarred him from holding any elective post in the party for three years. That was virtually the end of Bose's political career in India until he emerged as Netaji outside India during World War II and formed India's independence army (Azad Fauj). The Hindu while regretting that such drastic action had to be taken against a leader of Bose's standing said. "The Committee had no option in the matter if the character of the Congress as the chief political organisation of India was to be maintained intact".

Meanwhile, the political future of India was still in the realm of uncertainty and hopes of roping in the princes in the Federal scheme began to recede Shiva Rao from New Delhi reported on March 14, 1939, after the conclusion of a meeting of the Princes Chamber. "Federation has receded into the

background if it has not been killed, was the comment of more than one state's representative at the end of the proceedings of the Princes' Chamber. The clear impression created on the minds of those who listened to the observations of the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, Chancellor, is that the expression of approval of, let alone enthusiasm for, Federation was noticeably lacking and if further negotiations were ruled out the Princes must decide for themselves whether entry into Federation was worthwhile".

The Hindu said: "It is undoubtedly left to each ruler as the Jam Saheb, rather needlessly, reminded his hearers to join the Federation or not. But the princes cannot be allowed to go on engaging themselves in a kind of Dutch auction indefinitely. The need for introducing radical changes in the Central Government is urgent and cannot wait on the convenience and caprice of princely India. If within the next three or four months the princes do not come to any decision or a majority of them decide against joining the Federation, Britain will have no excuse whatever for wasting more time on the kind of negotiations that have swallowed up three years. She will have to take counsel with British Indian leaders for establishing a Federation for the British Indian provinces alone conferring the reality of power at the Centre. If on the other hand, the princes do decide to come in sufficient numbers the people in British India must insist that they can federate with them only on terms which satisfy the tests they have repeatedly laid down".

The Hindu reproduced in May a series of three articles by J. T. Gwynn, I.C.S. (Retd.) from the Manchester Guardian on the position of Indian states. He said "Yet one great service which the states rendered to India should not be forgotten. In the 100 years from 1810 to 1910 the native states were the only field in which Indians were allowed to exercise their talents as administrators and statesmen. It is only when we turn to the history of the states that we come upon the names of the 19th century Indians of whom India has reason to be proud".

On June 12, 1939, a three-day joint conference of Indian princes and representatives of states in Bombay passed a resolution virtually rejecting the Federal scheme as envisaged in the revised draft instrument of accession circulated among the princes a few months previously. The Hindu was angry and spoke out its mind. "Having taken nearly four years to make up their minds on the plea that they must have the complete picture before them and having succeeded in inducing the British Government to make more and yet more concessions regardless of public opinion in British India the princes still talk of fundamental difficulties. This kind of Dutch auction may be to their liking but the Indian public has no use for it and the Viceroy must refuse to give them any further opportunity for shilly shallying. The concessions made so far to princely importunity and prejudice have been declared, on behalf of the British Government, as the absolute limit beyond which it would be impossible to go without frustrating the Federal idea. Any attempt to placate the princes still further would be not only self-stultifying but intensify Indian opposition to the whole Federal scheme".

The Hindu added. "The Federation offered the princes a chance of securing partial freedom from the all pervading sway of paramountcy and of working in concert with public opinion in British India for their own complete emancipation in this respect. But the Bombay conference proceedings suggest that the

princes are prepared to hug their chains rather than throw in their lot with their own countrymen. That is their own affair but British India cannot wait on their convenience."

As war clouds gathered over Europe in July, 1939, *The Hindu* wrote: "To all outward appearances the European situation has reached a deadlock which can only be resolved by an outbreak of a general war. Both sides appear determined. Germany insists day in day out that she is determined to incorporate Danzig into the Reich and that nothing can stop the principle of self-determination from having full play. Poland, on the other hand, has made it clear that she will regard any attempt to change the status of the free city as a *casus belli*. And her top allies, Britain and France, have openly proclaimed their determination to stand by her in the hour of need. On a superficial analysis it looks as if the aggressors are being resolutely faced by the upholders of law and decency in international relations. But if we probe a little deeper it becomes apparent that the position is not so clear cut. The anti-aggression Front is still in the making and even if the Russian Pact should be concluded it has to be seen whether it will act in a moment of crisis under the leadership of Britain and France."

The Hindu published a Low cartoon showing Ribbentrop and Goebbels waiting on a bench with an attache case marked, "proposals for a Nazi-Soviet Pact to dish the Democracies" outside Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov's room on the door of which was hanging a board with the legend "Engaged; On talks re British-Soviet Pact". The caption to the cartoon was: "If the British don't, may be we will".

Low's cartoon proved prophetic and on August 21, 1939 the official German News Agency announced that Germany and Russia had agreed to conclude a non-aggression Pact and Ribbentrop was going to Moscow to complete the negotiations. The news came as a bombshell to *The Hindu* which declared: "The real reason for the dismay and shock arises from the incongruity of any understanding between the leader of the comintern and the architect of the anti-comintern Pact, between the robust champion of collective security and indivisibility of peace and the breakers of the League of Nations. It seems a strange culmination to five years of bitter ideological warfare in which Russia always appeared as the world's public enemy No. 1 and Germany figured in the Soviet Press as the arch-aggressor."

The Hindu added: "The British carelessness in sending a 'Foreign office clerk' to negotiate in Moscow, her unwillingness to underwrite the security of the Baltics and above all the fear that at any stage in a war she might come to separate understanding with Germany, have made Soviet Russia feel that the Anglo-French attitude is not to be trusted".

Noting that Britain and France while showing surprise at the move had said they would loyally carry out their obligations to Poland, *The Hindu* said: "But with the best will in the world, which is a large assumption, the Western powers will not be able to render any effective aid without Russian help. If this non-aggression pact goes through, it will mean the end of resistance to aggression and the collapse of the peace front".

And when the Soviet-German non-aggression Pact was signed in Moscow on August 24, 1939, *The Hindu* said: "Germany has given the statesmen of the world one more lesson in the value of quick decisions. Having tried to

collaborate in achieving collective security and failed, having found that even in the limited task of building a non-aggression front their would be partners showed all the old hesitancy and aloofness, the Soviets have come to the conclusion that there is perhaps more to be gained by a policy of isolation and neutrality"

As the war crisis deepened in Europe and Britain and the Dominions were feverishly engaged in last minute preparations to meet the impending catastrophe, The Hindu wrote: "But one important omission is noticeable, Great Britain has made no efforts — at any rate the public is not aware of any — to get into touch with leaders of Indian opinion and to meet fairly and squarely such issues as the Congress has raised. This is the more surprising when it is remembered that a big, nay, decisive factor in any struggle into which she may enter or be drawn would be the attitude of the Indian people. Circumstances into which it is unnecessary to go here have bred in the British mind the habit of taking Indian co-operation in an unquestioning spirit for granted. But it would be a dangerous delusion for the powers that be to imagine that all that is required is to wait till war — if unfortunately it should be that — is declared and then make appeals to the loyalty of India interlarded with generously vague promises and discreet allusions to the fate that might be in store for India should the empire go under. The remembrance of what happened after the Great War is still too vivid for India to make the mistake of supposing that she could, without self-stultification, engage again in a struggle which might involve the lives and happiness of millions of her people except of her own free will and as an equal partner. In other words, only a self-governing India, recognised as such for all practical purposes could undertake so grave a responsibility. . . what is needed now is an explicit statement from authoritative quarters of the recognition of India's right to full consultation coupled with the devising of suitable consultative machinery on the one hand for bringing about the association of Indian leaders with the Government in the handling of any crisis that may eventuate and on the other the initiation of steps for radically overhauling the Federal scheme"

Leonard W. Matters cabled from London on August 29 "We do not know our fate yet. The general public's mood is that of quiet, if anxious, waiting for decisions whose consequences are not easy to foresee. British nerves are quite steady, in fact very rigid and determined, following the recognition that this country is fully prepared and the conviction that nobody can submit much longer to constantly recurring crises. There is absolutely no sign of any panic and all indications show preparedness to meet the worst contingency"

The Hindu appealed to Britain to call Gandhiji for consultations. "If India is to throw her weight actively on the side of the democracies in case a struggle is unavoidable, it is obvious that the shortest way to set about it is for Britain to call Gandhiji to the council table of the Commonwealth in this hour of crisis and to make it possible for him to respond to that call. . . Again and again in the past few days we have been told that the British Government was keeping itself in constant and intimate touch with the Governments of the Dominions; but no word has been said of consultation with India. Why? Because her Government is still a 'subordinate branch of the British administration' carrying out orders from Whitehall in a routine fashion. India's active participation in any war in which the Empire is involved is not a matter of administrative routine; the sooner Britain gets rid of this outworn notion the better it will be for her.

Popular Governments are functioning in every province of British India, and their co-operation is indispensable if India is to be a help and not a drag . That in a nutshell is the hard reality which British statesmen have to reckon with They should therefore lose no time in taking counsel with Gandhiji and other accredited leaders”

On September 1, 1939, The Hindu published a Reuter's report from Paris “An unconfirmed (later confirmed) report states that the Germans have begun a violent offensive along the whole Polish front”. The paper carried news of developments in Europe on two pages, featuring stories from European capitals

The Hindu wrote “The lights are going out once again in Europe and soon there will be total darkness in which the evil forces of destruction will bring civilisation itself into jeopardy. This morning one single individual gave the dread signal. While all the world was praying for peace and a settlement by negotiation, when in every capital of the world statesmen with anxious faces were eagerly working for a compromise, by a stroke of the pen, the German Chancellor decreed that force should be the deciding factor in the relations between peoples Such is the evil system under which 90 million souls are being ground down that the caprice and mad impulses of a single individual should have unfettered sway and should decide the fate of all humanity Hitler tries to justify his decision to unleash the dogs of war by asserting that it is the ‘lunacy of the Poles’ that is responsible for the breakdown of the negotiations. But the world today and the historian of the future will have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion as to which party it is that is not in full possession of its senses With every prospect of arriving at a satisfactory settlement by moderating his demands, with every opportunity offered to him till the last to do things which will save ‘face’ and allow him to retreat with honour and dignity, Herr Hitler has chosen a path which can only lead to the destruction of his regime and the misery of his people”

On September 3, 1939, The Hindu carried an A.P.I. story from Simla. “Official intimation has been received by the Viceroy that H.M.’s Government in the United Kingdom is at war with Germany”. The paper issued daily supplements to cover war news. On the picture page on September 4, it carried various types of arms, planes, ships and troops used in the war against aggression

On September 5, Gandhiji issued a statement from Simla on his talks with the Viceroy “I told His Excellency that my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian standpoint. I told him that I could not contemplate without being stirred to the very depth, the destruction of London, which had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. And as I was picturing before him the houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart I am in perpetual quarrel with God that he should allow such things to go on. My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes at the end of the daily quarrel that neither God nor non-violence is impotent Impotence is in man I must try on without losing faith even though I may break in the attempt”.

Gandhiji referred to his letter to Hitler which he wrote on July 23 from Abbottabad (North-West Frontier Province) urging him to desist from war and said: “I must refuse to believe that Germans contemplate with equanimity the

evacuation of big cities like London for fear of destruction to be wrought by man's inhuman ingenuity. They cannot contemplate with equanimity such destruction of themselves and their own monuments. I am not therefore just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come but what will it be worth if England and France fall or if they come out victorious over Germany, ruined and humbled?"

The Simla Correspondent wrote "Gandhiji's statement has evoked general admiration and it is felt that while he could not say more, consistently with his creed of non-violence, his fine sense of justice and humanity has impelled him to make a generous gesture at this critical hour"

The Hindu said it was the duty of all who believed in the paramountcy of the moral law to "promote active goodwill towards the forces ranged against Hitlerism". It added. "It will not therefore do to look too curiously into the motives that may have actually led to the decision of Britain and France to declare war or to speculate whether these Powers would in the future be equally ready to wage war in the interests of righteousness or might not rather display the same indifference to the oppression of the poor and the weak as they have undoubtedly done more than once in the past. What they may do hereafter is not our immediate concern. But this fight they are now engaged in is a just fight and it is to the interest of all lovers of peace and reason to see that it is brought to a speedy and successful issue"

The Hindu urged that the Congress Governments should stay at their posts, carrying out such agency functions as they are entrusted with under the constitution on behalf of the Central Government "since to do so would be to hasten the day when India would have the fullest self-Government, war or no war"

Commenting on the Viceroy's announcement on September 11, that the Federal scheme would be suspended for the duration of the war, The Hindu said that the Viceroy should take counsel with India's leaders "The work of organising victory can be undertaken with confidence only by a strong Government. An 'irresponsible Government' at the Centre is not only an anachronism when in the provinces popular Governments are functioning. It must be singularly ill-equipped to deal with the thousand and one difficult and delicate problems which are bound to be thrown up by the war. Now that the Federal scheme no longer cumbers the field the Government must see the need, as much in the interests of the successful prosecution of the war as for tackling problems that might arise in the day-to-day administration, for setting up some such interim and provisional regime at the centre as the Madras Legislative Assembly visualised in a resolution which it adopted shortly after the Congress came into power. H. M's Government should realise what a splendid opportunity the moment presents for undoing the mistakes of the past and authorise the Crown Representative to get into touch with India's accredited leaders with a view to hammering out an agreement that should serve our immediate aim and open the way for the definitive settlement which a United India will forge for herself under happier circumstances".

The Congress Working Committee, on September 15, asked the British Government to declare its war aims and how these aims were to apply to India and were to be given effect to

The Hindu said the Committee's resolution "reveals a conflict between sympathy with the immediate and professed objective for which Britain has engaged herself in the struggle and suspicion of British intentions which Britain's record as an Imperial Power and in particular her attitude towards Indian aspirations have inevitably implanted in the minds of the Indian people. And it must be conceded that Britain far from attempting consciously to dissipate this suspicion, has with the blundering characteristic of her usual handling of the Indian problem provided more than one cause to stimulate and keep alive that suspicion".

The Hindu said the way was now clear to bring about changes in the centre "which would enable India to organise her war efforts in the immediate future energetically and efficiently by removing the objection which the Working Committee has voiced to the Indian people having to carry out orders issued by an external authority".

On October 17, 1939, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, made a declaration in which he said he was authorised by H. M.'s Government to say that at the end of the war they would enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India and with the Indian princes with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such constitutional modifications as may seem desirable. He announced the immediate establishment of a consultative group, representing all major parties and the princes which would have as its object the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war and with questions relating to war activities.

As regards the intentions and aims of H. M.'s Government with regard to India, the Viceroy reiterated the statement made in the House of Commons on February 6, 1935. That statement referred to the pledge given in the preamble to the Act of 1919 (of India's goal being Dominion Status). The Viceroy's declaration was the culmination of a series of interviews he had with Gandhiji, Congress and Muslim League leaders and representatives of other parties (the number mentioned was 52) in the course of many days.

"The Viceroy's long and laboured statement will be received with profound disappointment in the country", The Hindu wrote. "Notwithstanding his earnest personal desire, which is obvious, to minimise the unpleasantness of the message he had to deliver and to retain if possible India's support in the present crisis, he has been altogether unable to hide the signal failure of British statesmanship". The Hindu added: "We are constrained to say that the declaration about the goal is meaningless and redundant; that the promise about consultation after the war comes nowhere near satisfying India's unanimous demand that the placing of this country on an identical footing with the Dominions should be forthwith declared as the objective to be realised immediately after the war; and that a consultative committee such as the Viceroy envisages is the antithesis of that Dominion Status in action which alone would have served as an earnest of Britain's intention by actually initiating the process of transfer of power instead of merely using India's representatives as stalking horses for getting difficult things done in a time of crisis".

The Hindu said: "If Britain was actuated solely by the desire to safeguard the position of the minorities, the obvious course for her was to declare that so far as she was concerned India could have self-Government forthwith and to throw on Indians the onus of finding agreement within the framework of that

declaration. Why should this minority problem be constantly thrown in India's face as if it was peculiar to her? Canada and South Africa had minorities but they were not denied self-Government on that account. The procedure that the Viceroy adopted of summoning all and sundry to an audience because they put themselves forward "as leaders" amounted in effect to canvassing for disagreement, though that was not exactly intended. We would only repeat that India is no more handicapped than are the self-governing Dominions so far as internal differences go, while in the context of world realities too, she stands on the same footing as these; for if she is not in a position to defend herself by her own unaided efforts no more are they, when they nevertheless, claim the right to decide their destiny of their own free choice and Britain does not demur to this, why should she do so in the case of India alone? . That starveling make-believe of responsibility, the consultative council, which the Viceroy commends to our attention in words which are not less discreet than eloquent, is anything but what India had hoped for or wanted. He asks us to believe that 'in an association of this nature, of representatives of all parties and all interests, there lies the germ of that fuller and broader association of all points of view in the country which contain in it the seeds of such advantage for the future of India as a whole'. We cannot help feeling that the Viceroy talks as if India is to progress towards the goal appointed for her by Britain in geologic periods and by the imperceptible gradation of cosmic evolution."

"If Britain was, on the other hand", The Hindu said, "sincerely anxious to promote India to a place beside the Dominions with the minimum delay, the obvious course for her was to reconstitute the Central Government on a basis of atleast partial responsibility, the popular element being represented by the major political parties in proportion to their strength. That would have not only promoted India's war effort infinitely better than the consultative council is likely to do even if it gets going, it would have made it far easier for the major parties to work out in consultation with the interests concerned the details of the constitution that a free India could adopt after the war. But British statesmanship has once again been found wanting as it has often been in its dealings with India and we cannot contemplate the possible consequences with equanimity"

Gandhiji said the Viceroy's declaration showed that the "old policy of divide and rule is to continue. So far as I can see the Congress will be no party to it, nor can the India of the Congress conception be a partner with Britain in her war with Herr Hitler. The declaration shows clearly there is to be no democracy for India if Britain can prevent it. The Congress asked for bread and it has got a stone. The Congress will have to go to the wilderness again before it becomes strong and pure enough to reach its objective"

Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad said in a statement: "The hand of friendship that the Congress had extended has been spurned by the British Government". Clement Attlee and Arthur Greenwood, Deputy leaders of the British Labour Party, expressed "profound regret at the attitude of H.M's Government regarding India and the war. While conscious of the difficulties which the problem of India presents, the British Labour Party has always pressed that Indian aspirations for self-Government should be met at the earliest possible time".



Shiva Rao reported from Simla that the Hindu's suggestion for introduction of at least partial responsibility at the Centre, in place of the proposed consultative council, "has received attention, but the question asked in this connection is, amendment to the constitution being impracticable at this stage, does partial responsibility mean expansion of the Executive Council? Every paper of importance in India has urged in recent weeks far reaching changes at the centre though not as specifically as *The Hindu* has now done it. It is stated that no proposal goes unconsidered, two points being first, whether it is practicable, and secondly whether the Congress and other important organisations would accept it as adequate"

On October 22, 1939, the Congress Working Committee directed the Congress Ministries to resign. The Committee said the Viceregal declaration "is an unequivocal reiteration of the old imperialist policy" and added "In the circumstances it cannot possibly give any support to Great Britain for it would amount to an endorsement of the imperialist policy which the Congress has always sought to end". C. Rajagopalachari, Prime Minister of Madras, said at Wardha "Two and half years of responsibility in the provincial field — if it did not produce a change of psychology in the British Government and courage to proceed towards responsibility at the centre, the experiment should stand self-condemned"

"It is in no spirit of petulance that the Congress has acted", wrote *The Hindu*, "and the whole tenor of the resolution is the very antithesis of that waiting upon opportunity of which its critics have glibly accused the Congress when they protested it was trying to 'bargain' with Britain in this crisis. Freedom for India is a fundamental claim which can be abated only by being fulfilled; till that happens it must be India's supreme occupation and it is idle to blame the Congress for raising that claim at any time on the ground that it is 'untimely'. It is, on the other hand, peculiarly timely now. A war to exorcise the spirit of aggression must, as the Working Committee points out, logically aim at nothing less than a 'new order of peace and freedom' for the world as a whole. And the Congress asked for nothing more than that this aim should be consciously adopted by Britain and its logical consequences should be frankly faced and resolutely worked out so far as her dealings with India are concerned. Consistently with national self-respect and with its own declared policy the Congress could not have acted otherwise than it has done in asking the Ministries to tender their resignations".

With talk of changes in the Central Government in the air, *The Hindu* wrote on October 25 "The changes made in the Central Government while they must necessarily be of a provisional nature, should not be of such a character as to militate against an easy and natural transition to democratic self-Government. That emphasises the desirability of recruiting the popular side of the Cabinet from the political parties that are now responsible for the administration in the provinces in proportion to their strength and of ensuring them that measure of freedom and detachment which would enable them to work on the one hand without friction inside a Government which in form and structure would for a time continue to be bureaucratic and on the other to busy themselves with the task of hammering out an agreed constitution for self-governing India".

The Viceroy met jointly Gandhiji, Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah in New Delhi on November 1, 1939. In a dispatch before the meeting the New Delhi

Correspondent wrote: "An air of subdued optimism prevails in New Delhi on the eve of the Viceregal talks with Gandhiji, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah today. Much, though not everything, will depend on Mr. Jinnah's attitude. It is interesting to recall that Mr. Jinnah reminded the opening session of the Round Table Conference of Lord Irwin's declaration about Dominion Status and said: "India now demands the fulfilment of those promises". Turning to the Dominion representatives present at the opening session, he added 'I am glad they are here to witness the birth of the new Dominion of India which would be ready to march along with them in the British Commonwealth of Nations'. Thus a heavy responsibility rests on the leader of the Muslim League".

Before meeting the Viceroy, Gandhiji and Prasad met Jinnah at his house and later together with Jinnah they drove to Viceroy's House in Jinnah's car. They again had talks with Jinnah at his residence after returning from the Viceroy's House. Reporting on the talks, The Hindu Correspondent said "One hopes that developments later in the day will falsify the impression created by the events of yesterday. The brevity of the interview at the Viceregal Lodge and the greater brevity of the talks between Gandhiji, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah after the conclusion of the interview, have left a feeling that these discussions, obviously directed towards settling the communal issue have been inconclusive. Mr. Jinnah makes no secret of his demand that the Congress should negotiate with him as the leader of the only organisation competent to speak on behalf of the Muslims of India and thus reduce itself to a mere Hindu body. There is no reason if this position is conceded, why other communal organisations should not make a similar demand and if the Hindu Mahasabha follows the example the Congress will be left with no authority to represent anyone in particular. But until Mr. Jinnah's initial demand is met he is not disposed to discuss anything else. The fact that the Congress leaders unmindful of all his severe strictures both in the Indian and British Press have gone to him for a solution of the question is obviously brushed aside by him. Mr. Jinnah will be content with nothing less than unqualified acceptance of his claim".

Jawaharlal Nehru had talks with Jinnah on November 2 and 3 and Gandhiji again met Jinnah. Gandhiji also met the Viceroy. The resulting position was summed up by the Hindu Correspondent: "At one stage, in fact until yesterday morning (November 3) there was definite optimism that a general agreement might be possible but later in the afternoon it became increasingly clear that Mr. Jinnah would not be able to associate himself with the Congress demand on the main political issue. The Congress offer to the Muslim League boils down to this: "Join us in making a national demand for the drawing up of India's constitution on the basis of independence at the end of the war. We undertake to safeguard your interests and those of other minorities to your satisfaction but there must be no dictation from outside". Mr. Jinnah cannot presumably agree without risking his position with Sir Sikander Hyat Khan (Punjab Premier) and Mr. Fazlul Huq (Bengal) nor can he definitely oppose the suggestion and thus bring himself into conflict with that section of the League which forced the creed of independence on it. It is understood that the idea of expansion of the Executive Council is no doubt there but without a settlement

of the fundamental issue of how India's constitution is to be shaped at the end of the war, it is regarded as comparatively of minor significance".

The Viceroy announced on November 5 the failure of talks among Congress and Muslim League leaders which he initiated. He said he would try and try again till the deadlock was resolved. The Hindu said the Government themselves were primarily responsible for the failure of the talks and "so long as they do not realise this and reconsider their position accordingly, the prospect of their devising a successful solution must ever remain distant".

The Hindu referred to the Viceroy's mention of difficulties in the provinces, which should be settled if progress was to be made in the Centre with expansion of the Executive Council and pointed out the untenability of the contention that "advance in the Centre even of a minor and provisional character is rendered impossible by the emergence of difficulties in the provincial field connected with the minorities. And what can those difficulties which suddenly loom so large be? The Muslim League has been repeatedly accusing the Congress Ministries of 'oppressing the Muslims'. But the Congress has not only denied that allegation but again and again offered to submit any specific charges the League might make to impartial arbitration. So long as the League does not avail itself of this offer its contention on the strength of these unproven allegations that the safeguards for the minority rights in the provinces have broken down cannot be entertained. If these allegations of 'oppression' are set aside what are the differences in the provincial field between the Congress and the League which the Viceroy insists these organisations should settle among themselves first? We are unable to think of any unless it be the Muslim League's recent discovery that democracy is not suited to India. Are we to understand that Britain is now trying to recant? This age-long habit of an imperial race of playing off one section of a subject people against another seems ineradicable".

The demand for a Constituent Assembly to frame India's constitution was made by the Congress Working Committee on November 23. It believed that a Constituent Assembly alone was an "adequate instrument" for solving the constitutional and other communal difficulties.

Shiva Rao supplied an amusing interlude when he wrote to his Editor on September 5, 1939, on Jinnah's frantic efforts to meet Gandhiji. "Jinnah sent word yesterday to Gandhiji", he wrote, "that he was keen on meeting him but that he did not want the public to think that he was seeking an interview; therefore if Mahadev Desai (Gandhiji's Secretary) or some one else would request him to meet Gandhiji he was willing to do so. Mahadev Desai on Gandhiji's advice sent the reply that Gandhiji also on his side could not afford to create the impression that he was inviting Jinnah though he was at all times willing and even glad to see him".

In December Shiva Rao called on Jinnah in Bombay and Jinnah told him if Gandhiji would meet him as representing the Hindus they together would be able to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem in half an hour. "I mentioned this to Gandhiji", wrote Shiva Rao, "Gandhiji said: Jinnah is mad. I can never meet him as a representative of the Hindus. That is for the Hindu Mahasabha to do".

In the crisis months following the declaration of war and the resignation of the Congress Ministries, Shiva Rao was very active in the Indian capital and kept his Editor posted with the latest official thinking. He told him that

The Hindu's leading articles since the declaration of war were read in Delhi "with very great interest Greater importance is attached to them than to expression of opinion by any other paper in India" Reporting an interview with the Viceroy who discussed with him the question of expansion of the Executive Council Shiva Rao said Lord Linlithgow told him his difficulty was that if popular leaders drawn from different parties were to replace the present Executive Council and attempt the task of administration, the swing over from a departmental Government to a popular one might prove too violent and sudden. Moreover if they were to start discussing all sorts of problems which face the Government in normal times the problems of war might not receive sufficient attention. There was always the further danger that if they resigned over any issue they would go out with knowledge of the machinery of Government from within The last point, the Viceroy said, need not matter since that was inevitable under any system of responsible Government at any time

Again writing on December 2, Shiva Rao spoke of the Viceroy's cautious attitude "It seems the Viceroy is rather cautious because he feels that every time an effort was made to meet the Congress demand it failed to satisfy the Working Committee. As it was put to me this morning the Congress wanted a declaration and the Viceroy made it. This did not satisfy them, and they wanted an elucidation about Dominion Status etc That was given through Samuel Hoare but again proved inadequate Then there was a demand for the expansion of the Executive Council and the Viceroy with considerable difficulty obtained sanction for this also I, of course, pointed out that it was absurd to describe the situation in those terms since if the Viceroy had only taken the trouble to consult Gandhiji on everyone of these occasions he would have had helpful advice as to how the situation could be met".

Shiva Rao met the Viceroy again on December 9 and wrote to Srinivasan "I have just come back from Viceroy's House. H. E. said he was very pessimistic about finding a solution and the situation had deteriorated during the last three months. He was very sorry that the Congress had gone out of office and brought about a crisis. I told him that in the situation in which the Congress Working Committee found itself early in October it had to choose between two alternatives, namely, of sending their left wingers into prison for doing anti-war propaganda or allowing such propaganda to take place and thus abdicating the function of a Government. I repeated what I had told him on previous occasions that the right wing of the Congress was still anxious for a peaceful settlement on an honourable basis. The Viceroy referred to Mr. Jinnah's recent utterances and statements and said they were adding to his difficulties. Frankly, he took the view that while Mr. Jinnah might maintain a negative attitude he could not hope to retain the leadership especially of the younger Muslims for long on a policy of negation, anti-democratic and opposed to self-government. He said he had put the same thing to Jinnah himself and had received the answer that he knew his following better than the Viceroy. The Viceroy felt that the failure of the Congress to reach an agreement with the States and the League was a major factor in the present situation. I told him that so far as the states were concerned I felt that the more progressive states would be quite prepared to come into an All India Federation on a basis acceptable both to British India and themselves. So far as the Muslim League was concerned I agreed that in the present atmosphere the chances of a

settlement seemed remote. The Viceroy at this stage expressed his doubts about India's capacity to run parliamentary Government on the British model. The Act of 1935, he said, was no doubt based on such a conception. But the experience of Provincial Autonomy had raised the question whether it would not be better for India to go through an intermediate stage of non-party Government. I said this was too short an experience on which to base such a big conclusion."

On December 6, 1939 Jinnah called upon Muslims all over India to observe December 22 as a "Day of deliverance and thanksgiving" to mark Muslims' relief at the resignation of Congress Governments. "It is a hymn of hate that Mr Jinnah wants to be chanted from a thousand lay pulpits", said *The Hindu*, "though like the Hebrew prophets he prefers to call it thanksgiving for deliverance. Queer as Mr Jinnah's ideas of promoting inter-communal harmony are, his notions about the proper mode of ventilating grievances and getting them remedied are queerer still. It is high time that the Viceroy and the Governors told the world plainly what they think of Mr Jinnah's organised grouse which the longer it is left unquestioned by those in authority the more malignant it becomes, gathering a specious authority and a sinister momentum from mere iteration".

In a leading article on December 11, *The Hindu* developed the idea of a Constituent Assembly and said "Once Britain subscribes to the principle of a Constituent Assembly, it involves an undertaking on her part that she will not countenance any efforts to sabotage the scheme by raising a barrage of factious objections relating to procedure etc. Once such an assurance is forthcoming the Congress as the sponsor of the idea of a Constituent Assembly will spare no efforts to conciliate the minorities and secure their co-operation in the working out of the idea. What is required therefore is that the British Government should declare forthwith that the objective of their Indian policy is the raising of India to a position of absolute equality, in status, functions and powers with the free nations whose virtual independence is recognised by the Statute of Westminster. And they should couple this with the declaration that they accept the principle that India should be helped, as soon as the war is over, to frame a constitution for democratic Swaraj by means of a Constituent Assembly so constituted as to ensure that safeguards for minority rights shall be such as shall satisfy the minorities concerned. And these declarations should be followed up by the establishment of machinery which would help to hammer out an agreement between Indian opinion on the one hand and Britain and the Indian states on the other. . . . If the British Government means business it should lose no time in placing proposals in this behalf in broad outline before Indian leaders for their consideration".

The *Hindu's* arguments were buttressed by Shiva Rao in a dispatch from Delhi in which he quoted examples of Canada and Australia where Constituent Assemblies framed the constitutions.

In another dispatch, he said: "Questions which one hears in Delhi tend to confirm Mr. C. Rajagopalachari's recent statement that serious attention is being paid to the suggestion for a Constituent Assembly. No longer is the attitude in Delhi circles one of brushing aside the Congress demand as though it were absurd".

In December, 1939, Hitler was very much in everybody's mind if not also in their lips. The Hindu wrote this humorous piece about him.

"Who eggs on Hitler in his mad adventure? The eggs, of course, that he eats in enormous quantities, dressed in 30 different ways by his expert chef and the fat in which he likes his vegetables done. This may seem a somewhat inadequate explanation but coming from a housewife it cannot be dismissed lightly. This same lady, speaking to an audience on home making, said it all happened this way. Eggs and fat are good when eaten in moderation but too much of them tends to upset the liver. A man with a torpid liver is usually bad tempered, unreasonable and hard to live with. According to Henry Ford most crimes are due to wrong mixtures in the stomach. An ill-balanced diet will produce an ill-balanced man 'If Hitler had less eggs and butter and the German people had more the world would be a more peaceful place' Hitler as is well known does not drink or smoke or eat meat, but what is the use of his teetotalism and his vegetarianism if he dissipates in eggs dressed in 30 different ways? And after all was it not G. B. S., that arch vegetarian, who said: 'The vegetarians are the most ferocious beings — witness the elephant'. The Lady who has thus sized up Hitler to a nicety and who incidentally belongs to the British Commercial Gas Association says Hitler would become reasonable if he could be made to change his diet. That is what the Allied blockade is trying to do"

# Diamond Jubilee and a New Home

39

**O**N NOVEMBER 24, 1939, The Hindu entered its new home, also on Mount Road. It moved from 100, Mount Road where it had spent its formative years to 201, Mount Road, a palatial building with a vast compound. The report in The Hindu said "The *Grihapravesam* (entry into new home) into the new buildings of The Hindu at 201, Mount Road took place last evening. Great solemnity marked the function which was performed in traditional style. The ceremony began with the invocation of divine blessings by Brahmins learned in the Vedas in the present premises of The Hindu. Then the proprietors, accompanied by the members of the staff went over to the new buildings preceded by a group of *Vaideeks* (learned men) chanting Vedic hymns. The family purohit carried the *poornakumbham* at the head of the procession which reached the new premises precisely at 7 p.m. the hour appointed for ceremonial entry. On assembling in the main hall on the ground floor of the buildings, named Kasturi Buildings, after the late Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar, the great Editor of The Hindu, the prescribed homam and other rituals were gone through. The function which lasted over an hour concluded with benediction and mangala arathi, presentations to Vaideek Brahmins who had gathered in their hundreds and distribution of coconuts and pansupari to those present."

Kasturi Srinivasan had to overcome the sentimental objections of his mother, Kanakammal, whom he always consulted before he took any important decision connected with the paper. The old premises were full of unforgettable memories tied up with the growth of the paper from a struggling infant into a mighty national institution and no wonder the old lady was very much attached to it. But Srinivasan realised that to continue there would restrict the growth of the paper for 100, Mount Road was a narrow building with no room for expansion. The pressroom on the ground floor was a dark hole in which there was hardly enough room for men to move about. Srinivasan convinced his mother that the growth of the paper made it inescapable that it should move to a bigger place but he promised her at the same time that the old building would remain with the family. The new three acre site purchased by Srinivasan adjoined the offices of the Madras Mail and was just opposite Banqueting Hall (later named Rajaji Hall) in the Government House estate. The main block of Kasturi Buildings rose two storeys high and housed the

management and editorial departments of the paper and in an L shaped annexe were located the Press and the process departments. An electric lift, a novelty in Madras in those days, took visitors to the first and second floors. A life size painting of Kasturiranga Iyengar, which had been presented to The Hindu on the occasion of its golden jubilee, dominated the entrance lobby on the ground floor, while the bronze busts of G. Subramania Aiyer and Kasturiranga Iyengar adorned the lobby of the first floor which led to the main Editorial Hall. In later years life size portraits of K. Srinivasan and his brother K. Gopalan were also installed there.

In moving to the new premises Srinivasan was faced with the problem of shifting the printing press without losing a day's publication. He solved it by ordering a new most modern rotary printing press. The new machine was equipped with a colour unit and it could print a 16-page edition at 60,000 copies per hour. The composing room had a battery of 15 lino-types machines, many of them the latest Blue Streak models.

The Hindu's entry into its new massive home also coincided with the celebration of its Diamond Jubilee. The paper actually completed 60 years of its existence in 1938 but the celebration was postponed by a year to have it in the new premises. A 48-page special supplement was issued to mark the occasion on December 7, 1939.

On its 61st birthday The Hindu rededicated itself to the service of the people and to preserve the highest traditions of the Press. "The great heart of the public had displayed a constant affection for this journal and acclaimed it as a national institution", The Hindu said. The Hindu affirmed its faith in Democracy and to critics who argued that Democracy was a 'Western plant, an exotic which cannot survive transplantation', it replied that Democracy on the other hand was "essentially a spiritual idea, a way of life that is as akin to the Hindu and Muslim traditions as to that of Christian Europe in the Middle Ages". The Hindu said: "In India Democracy has to contend against the suspicion and distrust of the minorities and the forces of reactionary opportunism which seize upon that distrust to create divisions in our country. But if the minorities will only reflect a little they will see that no other system guarantees so effectively the rule of law which is the ultimate safeguard of all rights including minority rights. And democracy implies the fullest national freedom".

Referring to the role of the Press in educating public opinion, The Hindu said: "In India the newspaper reading public is a much smaller one numerically (than in the West) but it follows the discussions of public issues with an intelligence and zest which are becoming rare in lands with a longer journalistic tradition where the mass that is 'educated enough to read greedily but not to read seriously' has all but swamped the discriminating few. Those critics of Indian journalism, who, overlooking this important difference are all for 'brightness' and would like to see more of vim and snap in the expression of views forget that it is not by bludgeoning the reader's mind but by reasoning with it that the soundest and most lasting results can be achieved. For the authority of a newspaper is directly dependant on its ability to carry conviction to the largest circle of intelligent readers. As the Times said on a famous occasion, 'If we do not represent the opinion of the country we are nothing'. The ascertainment of public opinion (as different from the prejudices of the moment) and the evocation of the atmosphere favourable to its emergence are



therefore tasks that a newspaper which is not content to adopt a purely hand to mouth policy must set about with circumspection as well as earnestness. The many and complex issues on which it has to pronounce in the course of the day's work do not admit of a naive directness of treatment, a simple Yes or No. Where the choice is not between black and white but between various delicate shades of colour, slapdash methods and the unstable impetuosity which discards opinions as lightly as adopts them may work considerable harm. While in a country where the clamour of contending passions animated by race and creed often drowns the voice of commonsense, a judicial temper is an absolute necessity. Free discussion is the life breath of democracy. And it presupposes a readiness to set out the pros and cons fairly and to give the other fellow credit for honesty however wrong headed you may consider him to be. In a country which has deliberately eschewed the way of violence as unsuitable, whether for winning Swaraj or for securing internal harmony, it becomes the more incumbent on the Press to maintain steadily this appeal to the higher instincts. And the practice of best journalism the world over shows that honest and trenchant criticism is perfectly compatible with good temper and fairness to opposing points of view."

Declaring that Governments should not be denied support simply because they are Governments, The Hindu said whatever might be the duty of a political opposition "it is not the duty of the press to oppose any more than it is to support without adequate reasons. In every case it must be guided solely by considerations of public interest. It shall always be our earnest endeavour to fulfil the high obligations we owe to the public".

An editorial writer defended the display of news or lack of it in The Hindu. The Hindu has travelled a long way since 1939 but at that time it was not prepared to adopt the ways of what it called the popular press for "brightening up" its pages and thereby increasing its circulation, "by sensationalising the news, for instance, more particularly by giving streamer (more often than not screamer) headlines, "boxes" containing the so called human interest stories and similar shop window devices". "We plead guilty", said the editorial writer, "but will only say in extenuation that they belong to a different class of newspapers – the tabloid type. Nor is it mere snobbishness which makes The Hindu shun this method of display, but only the paramount importance of arranging news in a well ordered manner, each item in its appointed place where the reader can find it without being lost in a forest of types of all sizes and shapes. And, too, the practice of subordinating the subject matter to the needs of such mechanical display must often result in a rude tilting of the scale of news values".

There was at least one reader who valued the arrangement of news in The Hindu and he was W. K. M. Langley, Leader of the European group in the Madras Assembly. "I read The Hindu", he said, "because (1) its news columns are so arranged that you know where to look for what you want; (2) the news is set out in proper proportions without hysterical headlines, (3) its leaders definitely lead and do not follow public opinion; (4) it has a sporting page not surpassed by any newspaper in the world. Finally as a politician I have experienced the consideration of the Chief Reporter who follows the example of Dr. Johnson and frequently puts in our mouths much better sense than goes out of them".

The Hindu sports page, referred to by Langley, which made its debut under the fostering care and nurture of K Gopalan, was indeed very popular. Among the great world-renowned contributors who figured on this page were J. B. Hobbs, C G Macartney, Neville Cardus, Henri Cochet, C K Naidu, Roderich Menzee, Rene Lacoste and W T Tilden. The Hindu made special arrangements to cover visits of Indian hockey and cricket teams abroad and similar arrangements were made for football. Coverage of racing was a speciality with The Hindu and it went to the extent of appointing a stringer to write on the dress of the ladies at the races. It arranged for coverage of not only the acceptances and detailed results but appointed its own time keepers at all the leading turf meetings in Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore, Mysore and Poona from where special reports of the form of horses revealed on the track were telegraphed.

A specialist in race reporting was S Parthasarathy who came to be known as Race Parthasarathy or R P Parthasarathy was originally a part-time Correspondent and served in Bangalore. Once he was asked to investigate a report of police excesses in a place in North Kanara during the Satyagraha movement in 1932. He was arrested while taking down statements by women satyagrahis and he himself reported his arrest to the Editor. A Rangaswami Iyengar, then Editor, telegraphed to the Chief Secretary of the Bombay Government for orders to release him. The Collector of Dharwar not only released Parthasarathy but promised to look into the allegations made against the police. Parthasarathy made a mark as Sports Correspondent in Bangalore and was able to beat his rival paper, the Madras Mail, whose Editor, A. A. Hayles, according to a letter which Parthasarathy wrote to his Editor, complained to the A.P.I. Correspondent that The Hindu had beaten the Mail hollow on every important occasion.

The period between 1928-38 saw additions to the news staff and also the opening of the branch offices of The Hindu in India and overseas to cope with the demand for increased facilities both on the editorial and on the business side. There were expanded news services from Reuter, Associated Press of India and United Press of India. The number of Correspondents in various parts of the country which was 80 in 1928 rose to 150. The London office in Fleet Street was opened in July, 1933 and Leonard W. Matters was in charge of it. Cabled news increased in frequency and wordage and this service was followed by a bigger service of articles by air-mail supplying the background to the cables. The introduction of the all up air-mail service which brought Madras to within five days of London five times a week enabled the London staff to keep up a regular supply of interesting and instructive articles and descriptives giving the readers a picture of world events and trends with a completeness which would never have been possible with a cabled service alone. It was the more welcome because it coincided with a remarkable heightening of public interest in world events. The Hindu entered into special arrangements with British national newspapers like the Times, the Daily Telegraph, the Manchester Guardian, News Chronicle and the Daily Herald for a cabled and mailed service of news and their authoritative interpretation by distinguished special Correspondents on the spot. These were supplemented and illustrated by photographs from the fronts and maps showing the theatres of war. The Hindu had a daily picture page which carried both Indian and

foreign pictures and this feature was carried right up to the outbreak of the war and then it became one of the casualties of the eight page paper to which *The Hindu* was reduced

Probably *The Hindu's* best catch was David Low (about whom we have already mentioned) and devastating criticism, untouched by malice, of wrong, folly and injustice regardless of the power or the prestige of the offenders coupled with an amazing faithfulness in portraiture made his cartoons world famous, especially those relating to the dictators whom he lampooned mercilessly V K Narasimhan in his biography of Kasturi Srinivasan reports that the Germans tried to stop Low's cartoons from being published in *The Hindu* Under German pressure the German firm, Krupps, threatened to withdraw their advertisements from *The Hindu* unless Low's cartoons were stopped. Kasturi Srinivasan returned Krupps' contract telling them he would not tolerate any external interference on the right of the editor to publish what he chose

In India *The Hindu* had trained and competent men at the Indian capital and provincial capitals to supply its readers not only news but interpretative and background stories Foremost among them was B. Shiva Rao who was a tower of strength to *The Hindu* in New Delhi Shiva Rao came to *The Hindu* in 1935. He was a journalist of some standing although he was better known as a labour leader of Madras He had worked for many years on the staff of *New India* in Madras When Shiva Rao called on Kasturi Srinivasan one day in 1934 the latter asked him: "Would you like to go to Delhi?" Shiva Rao said he would think it over and in any case had to consult his wife who was in Benares He was no stranger to *The Hindu*. In 1931 he toured South India for propaganda for the Buy India League and he was interested in cottage industries about which he wrote in *The Hindu* Gandhiji had read his articles and one day Shiva Rao was surprised to receive a post-card from him in which he wrote, "Every time I read an article by you on cottage industry you come closer to my heart". Shiva Rao in reply told Gandhiji there should be a regular cottage industries movement and at Wardha Gandhiji asked him to be one of the full time secretaries of the Village Industries Association. Shiva Rao went to Benares and after consulting his wife accepted Srinivasan's offer and informed Gandhiji of his decision. He took over as *The Hindu* Correspondent in Delhi in January 1935. In those days the Government regularly arranged special interviews with the Viceroy for representatives of leading papers and that was how he came to know Lord Linlithgow rather intimately as we have noticed in the previous pages. He developed the practice of writing private letters to Srinivasan reporting the gist of his talks with the Viceroy and members of the Executive Council, things which he could not afford to mention in his dispatches Srinivasan circulated Shiva Rao's letters among senior members of the editorial staff and one senior Assistant Editor told Shiva Rao that he wrote his editorials on national questions based on the information supplied by him to the Editor. The Private Secretary to the Viceroy used to convey the Viceroy's reaction to some of *The Hindu* editorials to Shiva Rao and this was passed on to the Editor.

Shiva Rao had replaced in Delhi R. L. Rao who stayed there for two years, 1933 and 1934 Before that Rao had been *The Hindu* Correspondent in Allahabad where he had been succeeded by Iswar Dutt, a real live wire who had close contacts with top politicians in the United Provinces and most

intimately with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru Iswar Dutt was responsible for many scoops for *The Hindu* and he for a period served on the editorial staff at the head office

A. S. K. Iyengar of the Associated Press of India was also the Special Correspondent of *The Hindu* in Delhi from 1927 to 1935. This special correspondent service was run by Iyengar and Durga Das, both ace correspondents of the A.P.I. with the consent and approval of Reuters who managed A.P.I. The idea was, as explained by K. C. Roy of the A.P.I., "to keep out the other news competitors and preserve our monopoly to the utmost limit". When *The Hindu* ended the arrangement with Iyengar in 1935, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Editor, wrote to him a letter thanking him for his services. He said: "We need hardly say with how much regret we are terminating an arrangement which has existed for so many years and in which you as our representative have discharged your duties with such success, tact and ability. But I need hardly assure you that the happy personal relations which you have cultivated with Srinivasan, myself and others will not terminate on any account, nor our hearty goodwill and desire to continue our cordial relations under all circumstances". K. Srinivasan also wrote a letter of appreciation and presented to Iyengar a gold watch and chain as a memento of *The Hindu's* appreciation of his work.

In Salivateswaran, whom we have identified as Salvatti for sake of convenience in this chronicle, *The Hindu* had an able and resourceful correspondent in Bombay which was the hub of political activity, the gateway to India and home of great leaders. Salvatti excelled in exclusive interviews with the mighty and the lowliest and he had a way of forcing even the taciturn among the great to open their minds and hearts for him. We have seen already how he tackled Bernard Shaw when he anchored off Bombay. His weakness was absentmindedness which sometimes landed him in trouble as when he telegraphed the text of a memorandum submitted to the Viceroy by a merchants chamber running to many hundred words. When an angry Editor asked for his explanation he confessed the whole thing was a mistake. The message was intended for a Calcutta journal which had asked for it and wrongly sent to *The Hindu*.

From its very inception, *The Hindu* had been unique for its exhaustive coverage of mofussil news and paucity of trained hands limited its posting of Correspondents to new growing centres. To remedy this situation, the paper instituted the Kasturiranga Iyengar studentship in journalism. Under the scheme a graduate apprentice (who was required to be proficient in shorthand and typewriting) was chosen every year and trained in every department of newspaper work. Most of these trained men were later sent out as Correspondents to district centres and one of the earliest among them was K. S. Ramaswami who served as Correspondent in Bangalore, for a long term. Some of the trained men were absorbed in the Editorial staff too and notable among them were K. Balaraman, who was later to distinguish himself as the American Correspondent of *The Hindu*, and S. Rangarajan who rose to be Deputy Editor.

A senior mofussil Correspondent who remained as a part time Correspondent until his retirement late in the 1960's was A. V. Subramania Aiyer who was stationed at Tirunelveli for over 40 years. He was a find of Kasturiranga Iyengar who came to know of him from the letters to the Editor which he wrote on

various interesting topics in 1917 and the following years. When Kasturiranga went to Tirunelveli in 1920 to attend the Madras Political Conference, he made enquiries about A V Subramania Aiyer. A V.S., as he was known, was presented to him and he found him a young and very enthusiastic Congress worker who was in charge of the arrangements of the Conference. Kasturiranga straightaway appointed him as Correspondent at Tirunelveli. His performance was so good that later the Editor asked him to go to Trivandrum but A V S. declined as he did not want to leave his home district. A great scholar in Tamil in which he wrote many books, A V S. did not complete his college education owing to his political activities.

In Trivandrum The Hindu had T. S. Krishnaswami, a staff man, strong, reliable and incorruptible as its representative during the most trying time when the Dewan of the state harassed, bamboozled and made it impossible for honest and conscientious journalists to function. Krishnaswami weathered the storm and enhanced the reputation of his paper for integrity and impartiality.

In Hyderabad, which was to prove another storm centre shortly after independence, A V. Krishnaswami was holding the fort with ability and tact.

An idea of how mofussil correspondents functioned in the early days was given by C. R. Srinivasan, Editor of Swadeshamitran in a speech. The mofussil correspondent then had but a "morganatic" connection with his paper, he said. He was not on the pay-roll and he was not bound to render it regular service either. The truth of the matter was the correspondent adopted the paper for purposes of his own and used his wits and opportunities, "to levy a tithe in his pitch". He was "hail fellow well met" to all and sundry for miles around. He was feared as he was favoured for what he might or might not do. Those were days when printed words cast magic spells and to be mentioned in a newspaper was a distinction beyond ordinary. The old stagers were past masters in the art of psychology and they knew to a nicety how far they might apply the "toasting irons" to their victims on the one hand. They also knew how far the papers they served with singular devotion to themselves would put up with their vagaries and irresponsibilities. Delicately balanced between the two they lived on the fat of the land. Few newspapers at the beginning of the century were in a position to afford the luxury of paid correspondents even in important mofussil centres. When honorary correspondents volunteered to render service, "presumably in public interests", they were given the freedom of the paper within well defined limits.

The Hindu crest was changed in 1935. It had been the same as that used by the British Raj, depicting a lion and a unicorn with the motto in Latin, *Dieu et mon Droit* (For God and my right). Kasturi Srinivasan felt the crest was unsuited on the mast-head of a nationalist newspaper and invited designs that would fully reflect the culture and ideals of the country. The design that was chosen finally was authentically Indian. Explaining the new crest The Hindu said: "The new design is intended to symbolise Indian nationalism which The Hindu seeks to reflect in every aspect of its existence. Among other things the following may be stated to explain in general the various items composing the design. The 'Sun' is the source of knowledge and vitality, a living force; 'India'—the mother country, 'conch' symbolises the voice of the people of India, also secondarily used for broadcasting or announcing news; 'lotus' stands for purity and independence; the blades of grass stand for multiplicity

and fertility—the growing popularity of the paper, the ‘elephant’ for strength and power; and the ‘Kamadenu’ for auspiciousness”.

The Hindu added: “It is unnecessary to add that there is nothing sectarian or denominational in the new crest or the symbols comprising it; even as there is nothing of religious significance in the name Hindu which merely means Hindusthan, that is, the land of Indians”

In its special jubilee number The Hindu published tributes from all parts of the land and abroad and the two among them which we reproduce are representative of the high standing and popularity which the paper commanded. An admirer wrote. “A faithful chronicler of events and mirror of the prevailing national mood, a reliable guide to national aspirations, a weighty exponent of national issues and a fearless critic of affairs, it is and has always been the people’s paper. Encyclopaedic in its range, and varied in its appeal, Catholic in its taste and generous in its understanding, sober in outlook and majestic in its mien it deserves to be saluted as one of the most beneficent instruments of political and intellectual awakening in the South. Loved by its adherents and respected by its opponents, and neglected by none, The Hindu is one of the greatest constructive forces in modern India”.

“S.V.V.” (S. V. Vijayaraghavachari) wrote. “The Hindu has become so much a part of one’s life — its luxury as well as its necessity — so much an item of one’s daily cravings that one cannot help rejoicing over every prosperity that comes to it. I don’t know that there is one in our part of the country that would go to sleep comfortably without having read his Hindu for the day. . . . The one great lesson I have learnt from my connection with it is that if one wants to protest against a wrong or an injustice or has to attack any policies, measures or tendencies, outbursts of passion and language of irritation are neither arguments, nor do they serve any purpose except creating bad blood. The Hindu has set that high standard not only by its editorial example but by the kind of matter it permitted to go into its other columns. . . . Reputations of public men were perfectly safe in its hands. It has rigorously kept itself away from the pernicious habit — from which some of even the best of foreign newspapers are not free — of digging up private lives of public men with an eye on sensation and circulation. It never made any propagandist selection of news and it never excluded any section of the public differing from its own views, from having recourse to its columns, pressing its rights or ventilating its grievances. . . . The part The Hindu played in the evolution of intellectual thought in the country is incalculable. With many The Hindu is the main source of intellectual nourishment and it is no exaggeration to say that our thoughts and opinions on every subject today are as The Hindu has helped to form them”

A Correspondent in the London Times’ Trade and Engineering supplement in April, 1939, said this of The Hindu. “Among the Indian owned newspapers The Hindu of Madras takes the first place. Both in production and editorial supervision The Hindu compares with the important newspapers of Great Britain. While giving broad support to the Congress Party it is not uncritical of the organisation, is well informed and is more restrained in its criticism of British policy than is generally the case with Indian newspapers”.

In the higher echelons of The Hindu an important development in this period was the retirement of its senior Assistant Editor, V. S. Ramaswami Sastri, who

joined the paper shortly after Kasturiranga Iyengar took it over. In a tribute to him after his death in May, 1944, *The Hindu* wrote. "Mr. Sastri was a man of singular personal charm. Simple, pleasant and unassuming he had a host of friends. He had a wide knowledge of men and things and an admirable catholicity of outlook. He was particularly interested in constitutional problems and he favoured the idea of a National Convention to settle India's constitution long before the idea was taken up by the organised political parties and also in social reform, education and public health. He joined *The Hindu* a few years after Kasturiranga Iyengar took it over as an assistant editor and on him fell a good share of the work of the paper as well as office work. In 1918, he left *The Hindu* to edit a Liberal paper, the *Citizen*, and later joined *New India* as Assistant Editor. He returned to *The Hindu* as Chief Assistant Editor in 1924 and retired in 1938".

Ramaswami Sastri, younger brother of the better known Srinivasa Sastri, was industrious and well-informed with a special bent for the study of subjects bearing on the constructive activities that build up a nation and of questions connected with the welfare of Indians overseas. His writings were marked by lucidity and a clear grasp.

*The Hindu* during this period had some of the most experienced and talented editorial writers on its staff. We have already mentioned K. P. Viswanatha Aiyer and N. Raghunatha Aiyer. With them were S. Parthasarathy, a cousin of K. Srinivasan, who was to be editor many years later, S. A. Govindarajan, a product of the Presidency College, Madras, who served as Press adviser during World War II, G. Parthasarathy, nephew of A. Rangaswami Iyengar, who later found a new career in Free India's foreign service, V. K. Narasimhan, who was to write the biographies of Kasturiranga Iyengar and his son Kasturi Srinivasan and J. B. Appasami who went to London for a short period shortly before the outbreak of war to assist Leonard Matters, the London Correspondent and who wrote a weekly feature from there under the pseudonym "Innocent abroad". There was no regular News Editor in those days and the Assistant Editors divided the work among themselves and supervised the sub-editors whose numbers were few. The first News Editor to be appointed during the course of the war, was C. R. Krishnaswami, son of C. Rajagopalachari, who joined the paper towards the end of 1923. Krishnaswami, or C.R.K. as he was affectionately called by his colleagues, was an ardent nationalist who left College in 1921 at the call of Mahatma Gandhi.

There was a galaxy of reporters, headed by G. K. Vasudeva Aiyer whose mission to Trivandrum we have already reported. Vasudeva Aiyer himself served as Correspondent in Madurai before he came to the head office. Under him were veterans like A. K. Venkatesa Aiyer (who took over later as Chief Reporter), Ramakrishna Aiyer, Neelakantan and Viswanatha Aiyer who were the pride of the profession and who made *The Hindu* reporting an art, the finest, most accurate and polished in the whole of India. In charge of the picture page and the press was Dandapani Aiyer whose speciality was *The Hindu Illustrated Weekly*, later the Sunday Edition and various special supplements issued on festive occasions. He was a lover of photography and made his daily picture page popular.

When the Manager of *The Hindu*, M. N. Parthasarathy Naidu retired in 1937, he was succeeded by G. Narasimhan, K. Gopalan's son, who was to become

Managing Editor later Parthasarathy Naidu had been Manager since 1928 and was known for his extreme devotion to the paper and his allround competence in running a newspaper organisation. He had joined the paper as a clerk 26 years earlier. Another notable personality in The Hindu was Narayana Aiyer, the Advertisement Manager, who did much to improve the advertisement coverage of the paper. A familiar figure round the huge building was Mr Woods the burly but soft spoken Rotary Superintendent and Maintenance Engineer.



**T**HE YEAR 1940 was Jinnah's year in Indian politics and he emerged as the greatest stumbling block to freedom. It was also the year in which the Congress resolutely stuck to its demand that the Indian constitution should be framed by Indians and declared that nothing short of Independence would satisfy the people of India. The Hindu while combating Jinnah's pernicious two-nation theory, urged Britain to concede India's just demand.

An indication of the mood of Jinnah, who was described by *The Hindu* once as the "ace of obscurantism", was supplied by his reaction to a letter written to him by Gandhiji in January in which he addressed him as "Dear Qaide Azam", and wanted to know if it was all right. Jinnah replied "I thank you for your anxiety to respect my wishes in the matter of prefix you should use with my name. What is in a prefix; after all a rose called by any other name smells just as sweet. So I leave the matter entirely to you and have no particular wish in the matter. Really, I do not know why you are so much worried about it. I however notice that the present prefix you are using is according to the usage taught to you by the late Hakim Sahib but surprisingly enough during his life time and till long after his death you addressed me as "Mr.", then quite recently, you addressed me as "Shree" and in between as "Friend", but please do not bother about this matter". In the same letter Jinnah again propounded his two-nation theory. "Let me say again that India is not a nation, nor a country. It is a sub-continent composed of nationalities, Hindus and Muslims being the two major nations. Today you deny that religion can be a main factor in determining a nation but you yourself when asked what your motive in life was said: "Purely religious". This was the question asked me by the late Mr. Montagu when I accompanied a deputation which was purely political. 'How you, a social reformer', he exclaimed, 'have found your way into this crowd?' My reply was that it was only an extension of my social activity. I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind and that I could not do so unless I took part in politics. The gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into water-tight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of sound and fury signifying nothing".

The Hindu commented "He (Jinnah) overlooks the obvious fact that any religion that imparts this universality of outlook cannot become the differentia of a particular nation and the politics of a truly religious man cannot be communal politics" Referring to his demand, The Hindu wrote "What are we to think of the democratic professions of this 'practical' politician who would make the entire future of the country hinge upon the acceptance by the Congress of his organisation as the sole representative of the Muslim community irrespective of the wishes of the community itself? The Congress is invited to do this so that Mr Jinnah may kill two birds at one stroke, the Congress on the one hand would write itself down for a communal body and the most extravagant attitude that Mr Jinnah and the League may choose to take up — as in maintaining that the Muslims are a separate nation — would have to be regarded as a demand coming from the entire Muslim community. The Congress cannot do what he asks it to do, for apart from any question of self-respect, to concede this claim of this 'major nation' as Mr Jinnah calls the Muslims, would be to open the door to similar claims by all other 'minor nations' and that would be the surest way of letting chaos loose. When mankind is realising that unbridled political nationalism has played untold havoc and nations well differentiated by race, tradition, and geography and with centuries of separate existence and development behind them are exploring the possibilities of closer union and even a world Federation, it would be midsummer madness to balkanise India in order to oblige Mr. Jinnah and his friends"

In an earlier editorial on the two-nation theory The Hindu wrote: "To talk of a Hindu and Muslim nationality is to be guilty of a misuse of well understood political terms. The vast majority of the Hindus and Muslims of India, as for that matter Christians and other religious communities, belong to the same racial stock and are the joint inheritors of an ancient civilisation, which in so far as it has been influenced by other cultures, has passed on those influences to all communities living in India though the effect of the impact may have varied with the different nationality, otherwise few nations in this world with its hundreds of faiths could be accounted homogeneous nations. Polyglot America and the U S S.R. are two monumental refutations of the League theory of nationality"

On February 6, 1940, Gandhiji issued a statement on the failure of his talks with the Viceroy in New Delhi on the previous day. He said. "The vital difference between the Congress demand and the Viceroy's offer consists in the fact that the Viceroy's offer contemplates final determination of India's destiny by the British Government whereas the Congress contemplates just the contrary. The Congress position is that the test of real freedom consists in the people of India determining their own destiny without outside interference. I see no prospect whatsoever of a peaceful and honourable settlement between England and India unless the vital difference is obliterated" It was explained on behalf of the Viceroy, in an official communique on the talks that Britain's intention that India should attain Dominion Status at the earliest possible moment was stressed. The Viceroy added that the offer to expand the Governor-General's Executive Council remained open and H. M's Government were prepared to give immediate effect to it

The Hindu's view was that the British Government should take the one and only step that would end the impasse by declaring "their adherence to the principle that the people of India should determine their own destiny without outside interference"

The demand for complete independence and a constituent assembly to frame India's constitution was reiterated by the Congress Working Committee in a resolution which was later adopted at the Ramgarh (Bihar) session of the Congress in March

In another appeal to Britain, The Hindu wrote: "In the light of world conditions today, her own declared intentions towards the weak and oppressed in Europe and the fact that India is too big, powerful and conscious of her rights to be treated any longer as a domestic problem of the Empire, Britain should see the wisdom of renouncing once and for all the claim that she must decide India's destiny for all time. Along no other lines can a peaceful solution be ever found. Paternalism has had its day. Will British statesmen realise this before it is too late?"

Sir Mahomed Zafrullah Khan, member of the Viceroy's Council, told Shiva Rao that the rejection of the Viceroy's offer by Gandhiji had created "disappointment" "Both in London and in New Delhi there was a good deal of real anxiety to come to terms, he told me", Shiva Rao wrote to the Editor. "With six Indian members in the Executive Council he thought there was nothing India could not get out of the British Government. He was bitter against Jinnah for his perverse and unhelpful attitude and felt that while on the one side the British Government could not afford to dethrone Jinnah, there was little possibility of a communal understanding so long as he was the leader. The Viceroy's problem was to make no statement in India that might disturb Conservative opinion in London"

The Delhi Correspondent informed the Editor on February 21 of a talk he had with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad whose mind was working on the lines of a convention. The Muslim members of provincial assemblies would elect a certain number of representatives and the other members would do likewise. This elected body would get together and decide the preliminaries of a national convention. Shiva Rao told Azad that Jinnah was agreeable to a national convention on certain conditions. In the event of a deadlock Jinnah said he would prefer the whole convention to be dissolved and the Provincial Assemblies asked to re-elect the convention. After a talk with Zafrullah Khan Shiva Rao told Kasturi Srinivasan that it was not possible to consider a settlement on the basis of a convention instead of a Constituent Assembly because it would mean in essence the denial to Britain of any share in the framing of India's Constitution

The Congress resolution at Ramgarh (demanding independence) "has caused resentment in official circles", Shiva Rao wrote to his Editor on March 9, 1940 "Strong pressure is being put on the Viceroy to hit back but he is not going to yield to reactionary advice"

Kasturi Srinivasan showed Shiva Rao's letter to C. Rajagopalachari whose comments were forwarded to Shiva Rao. "It is true", C. R. said, "that the Patna resolution of the Working Committee definitely rules out Dominion Status as unacceptable. The view expressed by me and Bhulabhai (Desai) was that the Congress goal of independence could be reached through acceptance of Dominion Status at present if the same was to be definitely offered. I believe

it would not have been impossible to induce my other colleagues to take this position. But the course of negotiations and the attitude presented by the Viceroy and the British Government and the general tendency of the British approach to the Indian issue have led Gandhiji to the new firm conclusion that as long as there is British connection there will be no real encouragement to Indian unity and that the Hindus and the Muslims would for ever be condemned to stand apart from one another. He has come to the definite conclusion that Britain is not sincere in her attempts at unity-making and he has chosen the lesser of the two evils, namely, to take the risk of even civil discord in preference to maintaining British connection under which there is no doubt but certainty that Hindus and Muslims must be divided. He thinks that civil discord may end in disunity but powerful foreign connection leaves no chance for unity."

Referring to the British objection to the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly, C.R. said "The objection of the British Government is that once an organised committee or other body is set up for purposes of framing the constitution they will be taken to have accepted the principle of self-determination. They don't wish it to be taken as conceded. They would, therefore, object to any kind of officially set up committee or other body. They would rather have unorganised unofficial conferences so that their own decision may be the last word on the subject. Hence their partiality for Gandhi-Jinnah meetings, for Muslim League-Congress Conferences and the like, rather than for any form of convention or assembly summoned by themselves."

"I have no doubt in my mind", said C.R., "this is what stands in the way. Hence I think proposals from non-Congress leaders for any alternative to a Constituent Assembly will share the same fate as and be treated just like the Congress proposal for a Constituent Assembly".

Shiva Rao met the Viceroy on March 27 1940. Lord Linlithgow told him he could not at present get from H.M.'s Government a declaration that whatever the form of constitution that India's representatives might draw up they would accept it. He was quite prepared at the time he met Gandhiji early in February and even now to recommend the setting up of two parallel committees, one to work in India and the other in England. So far as the Indian Committee was concerned its personnel and method of working would be entirely for Indians to determine. Arrangements could be made for one or even more consultations between these two committees to smooth over possible difficulties and differences. Beyond this he did not feel to go as at present advised. What view H.M.'s Government might take, say in 1941, of course he could not say. "Then the Viceroy said something which came to me as an agreeable surprise", wrote Shiva Rao. "He said if Congress leaders would accept a solution somewhat on the lines of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1922 there may be no serious difficulty from the British side. I immediately seized the point and suggested that if a declaration could be made with regard to the main problems like defence, the Indian states, and British commercial interests the very language of that agreement, namely, settlement in a spirit of friendly accommodation by the two countries; the Congress would very likely accept it. Then I said to him that if after such a declaration the Viceroy could summon the Premiers of the 11 provinces to devise the procedure for drawing up constitutional proposals the way would be open for resumption of Government in the Congress Provinces and the expansion of the Executive Council".

Shiva Rao added that with the Premiers might be associated Dewans of a few major states "The Viceroy recognised there was a good deal to be said for this suggestion though there were obvious difficulties in the way. He wondered whether if he summoned the Premiers of the provinces (some of them at present are only ex-Premiers) they would come. The Viceroy said that no one seemed anxious for a clash and that was a hopeful feature of the present situation"

Shiva Rao followed up this meeting with one with Gandhiji on April 12 and he reported that Gandhiji was quite willing to have a small committee of Englishmen and Indians to evolve a formula acceptable to both sides. "I could see from the trend of his conversation that he was prepared to make large concessions once the principle of self-determination was conceded. We talked a good deal about the Indian states. I conveyed to him V.T. Krishnamachari's idea of the treaties being revised to fit in with the Federal scheme and the revised treaties made binding on the Federal Government with a right of reference to the Federal Court in matters of dispute. I said to Gandhiji that it might be of advantage to us also if in accepting obligations arising out of the revised treaties the responsible Government of India made certain conditions, namely, the submission of annual administration reports of all the states and the carrying out of the principles of good Government which the Paramount Power is supposed to do. Gandhiji thought a good deal could be done on those lines. The pity is, he said, the princes do not realise that he is their best friend".

The princes indeed were on the warpath. In a talk which Shiva Rao had with one of their leading members, the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, he learnt that the Jam Saheb had seen Jinnah and the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and was later going to see Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. "He told me frankly", Shiva Rao wrote, "that he was hoping for a combination of the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Depressed Classes, the Non-Brahmins and the Liberals in order to fight the Congress". Shiva Rao added that Sir Edward Benthall, the European leader, had seen Jinnah in Delhi on a somewhat similar mission.

Another strong opponent of the Congress from the side of the princely states was Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Dewan of Travancore, who said in Madras in February "To state that the princes will have to join the National Assembly not as individuals but as the duly elected representatives of their people is to ignore the facts of history and even the present posture of affairs. It is not correct to say that the states have no status apart from the Crown. Many states have maintained an independent existence for hundreds of years and some states including Hyderabad and Travancore and many of the Rajput and other states have never been conquered or annexed. . . It cannot be asserted that if the Crown parts with power today the princes also have to do so. Nor can there be an automatic transference of allegiance or obligations or rights to some other political entity excepting on the basis of fresh understanding and new treaties. On the other hand if the Crown withdraws from India the Indian states presumably will reassume the position they occupied in India before the treaties were entered into".

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer proceeded to question the validity of the demand for Dominion Status, not to speak of Independence. He said, "The demand for Dominion Status is in my opinion conditioned to no small extent upon the speedy attainment of India's capacity for self-defence an attainment to be

worked for intensively by the Government and the people, alike. Without a solution of the problem of defence, Dominion Status of any variety whatever cannot under Indian conditions be achieved or maintained. As for Independence of any kind it is in my humble view so far beyond the range of practical politics that it cannot be debated seriously in view especially of what is taking place all over Europe and Asia."

A frequent contributor to *The Hindu* was the eminent British constitutional expert A. Berriedale Keith. In a letter to *The Hindu* he controverted the claim of Hyderabad that it being linked indissolubly to the Crown any partial transfer of those relations to another authority must require the Nizam's assent and that any radical change regarding Defence could not be applicable to Hyderabad without its consent. Keith said "The sovereignty of the British Crown means the sovereignty of the Crown in Parliament which neither Hyderabad nor any other state has any legal or moral right to question. All that they can demand is that such sovereignty shall be exercised on principles of justice and equity in the interests of the people of India as opposed to the selfish claims of individuals."

Keith pointed out that although the Crown had long maintained the system of autocratic rule in India, it had wisely decided that the time had come to entrust as large a measure as possible of Government to the elected representatives of the people. "It is impossible for the Crown's advisers to contend that the people of the states shall be denied the rights of Indians in the provinces and it is their clear duty to advise the King-Emperor to use this authority to secure that the princes shall enter upon constitutional reforms which will result at no distant date in securing responsible Government thereto. No Federation can be deemed in the interests of India if in it the representatives of the people of the Provinces are compelled to sit with nominees of irresponsible rulers. There is in fact no answer to Mr. Gandhi's claim that the princes are bound to follow the Crown in its transfer of authority to the people."

The demand for Pakistan was first put forward in an indirect way by the Muslim League at its Lahore session on March 22, 1940, when it declared that "no constitutional plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, namely, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted that the provinces in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign; and that adequate effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for the minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in connection with them". The resolution authorised the executive to frame a scheme in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs etc."

The Hindu thought that any division of India into Hindu and Muslim India on principles of "natural autonomy" would "involve so unnatural and artificial a refashioning and reorientation of autonomous units, would mean so grave a hardship to large sections of the population who might be moved like pawns on a chessboard according to the fancy of Mr. Jinnah's constitution-mongers

and would above all do such violence to the national sentiment of the people that it is bound to be resisted with infinitely greater force than that with which Mr. Jinnah lightly threatens India when he talks of civil war as the inevitable outcome of any attempt to repeat such Governments as we have had in the provinces in the last two and half years"

C. Rajagopalachari, who was later to support Jinnah's demand as a lesser evil, assailed his assumptions "I consider it a sign of a diseased mentality that Mr Jinnah has brought himself to look upon the idea of one India as a misconception and the cause of most of our troubles. It is not the conception of one Indian nation, but the mischievous concept of two Indian nations that threatens to lead India to destruction if those who are responsible for it fail to revise their notions in time. To take India into the condition of the Balkan states seems to be the proud aim and goal of Mr. Jinnah. Surely he knows in what state the people of the Balkan peninsula are with Germany and Russia waiting for a convenient hour to take them over"

The Hindu made a detailed analysis of the League's proposal for division of India and pointed out the absurdities inherent in the scheme and it concluded "Neither the cantonisation of India, nor the creation of a Pakistan or other variant with extra Indian affiliations will be tolerated for a moment by the people of this country for whom India is one and indivisible, an inviolate legacy and an imperishable inspiration"

The Hindu said. "Britain if she wants to can call Mr Jinnah's bluff tomorrow. The Congress plan of a Constituent Assembly is fought shy by the League simply because the latter knows too well that its pretensions to speak as the sole representative of the Muslims will be immediately disproved. But whether this plan is adopted or some other which might be considered more feasible it stands to reason that constitutional discussions can proceed only on the plane that India's unity should be accepted as an axiomatic proposition"

The Hindu suggested that a small body of representative leaders—the Premiers who were or were lately in charge of the provinces were an obvious choice because they had administrative experience as well as authority—could be invited to hammer out the essential preliminaries and to suggest interim measures for infusing a new life into the central Government and making it truly expressive of the will of the people. "Only by such constructive effort can Britain redeem her reputation for sagacity", the Hindu said

In a blunt warning to communalists and especially to Jinnah The Hindu wrote in April "By following the policy of cutting the nose to spite the face they have enabled Britain to adopt tactics which if they have achieved a temporary success today in frustrating the hopes of a nation will as inevitably serve to torpedo the Muslim League's dream of independent states when the time comes. For the seeds of suspicion and hatred which Mr. Jinnah and his friends are sowing with both hands must multiply like the dragon's teeth of the Greek fable and the minorities' stunt react with all the force of a boomerang since by no mental ingenuity can India be cut up into States entirely devoid of minorities and every one of these artificial minorities could plausibly ask for independence as the Muslim League is now asking. Mr. Jinnah and the other apostles of the two nation theory talk as if India had never known unity of outlook and harmonious development. 'Mr. Gandhi begins his work by prayers and recitals of Bhagavad Gita; Mr. Gandhi believes in ashram, and samities, ahimsa,

spinning wheel, Khaddar, Bandemataram, Sankritised Hindi, Vidya Mandir, and the Wardha Scheme', says Mr. Jinnah, 'and no Muslim can honestly subscribe to the cult and culture of this kind' Nothing can be more superficial than this slick judgment. While for the Indian Muslim the Koran naturally takes the place of the Bhagavad Gita, he is fundamentally as devoutly religious in outlook, as much a believer in the dignity of labour—of which history shows no more shining exemplar than the Emperor Aurangzeb by the way—and as eager to promote voluntary co-operation for social ends as is Gandhiji. It is in these similarities and in the common culture to which Sir S. Radhakrishnan has referred, that the lineaments of India's common culture of which the Hindu and Muslim are equal makers and equal participants, are to be traced. Should it not be far easier for Hindus and Muslims who are predominantly of the same racial stock to achieve a new cultural synthesis and political homogeneity while maintaining their own rich individuality? The one thing needful is tolerance and understanding."

On June 3, Shiva Rao reported from Simla of a "Jinnah complex" in the official world. "There is the incredible Jinnah complex which seems to obsess the official mind. No step can be taken, however reasonable, lest Mr. Jinnah should be offended. Prominent Muslim League leaders themselves admit that the time has come for bold decisions. The rapid deterioration in the international situation has brought them face to face with the dangers of playing with the Pakistan idea." The Hindu remarked "The truth is that in their anxiety to see the Congress 'dished' those who have the ear of authority have persuaded themselves to take Mr. Jinnah at his own valuation and believe or affect to believe that 'it is the resistance of the Muslim League' in Mr. Jinnah's own words, 'to the machinations of the Congress that has compelled the Congress leaders at this moment to make a virtue of necessity when they say they do not want to embarrass the British Government'. It may please Mr. Jinnah to imagine with Aesop's fly that it is he that makes the wheel go round. But in her own interest it is high time that Britain realised that it would be much more to her purpose if the Congress could be won over than if it were to be paralysed—even supposing that Mr. Jinnah could bring off that feat by himself or with the help of others".

A few days later The Hindu urged the Congress to take the initiative to break the deadlock. It pleaded that the Congress should agree to coalition Governments in the provinces, thereby "removing the one obstacle which according to the League is blocking the way to its co-operating with the Congress. Besides such an offer will leave Britain without even the shadow of a pretext for refusing to accept the Congress demand that a truly national and autonomous administration should be set up in India forthwith".

The Hindu's suggestion was welcomed in Simla and its Correspondent wrote: "A joint demand by the Congress and the League Working Committees for national Governments in the provinces and the Centre would naturally carry great weight with Mr. Amery (Secretary of State) who has indeed hinted that their coming together would solve the problem. Simla's attitude in the past six months, has been so strong in one respect that only overwhelming pressure will change it. The argument seems to be like this: 'The Congress abandoned a position of tactical advantage of its own accord and why should we help it to come back? Our arrangements whether to meet civil disobedience or



for the formation of civic guards and war boards are complete. Moreover Gandhi, C Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad and other Congress leaders make helpful statements on critical occasions' "

"So everything is beautiful", said the Correspondent, "as viewed from Simla's hill tops. The Secretariat moves on in its old grooves. Work is measured in terms of files disposed of and not the number of decisions taken. Tradition dies hard anywhere but it is particularly obstinate in Simla. Reputations here are built on one's capacity to write elaborate notes in literary style critical of new proposals and if files accumulate as they are bound to in wartime the remedy is in the appointment of more I.C.S. officers, all the posts going to Europeans. All this must change but it will not change if the initiative rests with men on the eve of retirement who have come to regard the Government of India as a place of refuge from progressive tendencies and to whom even provincial autonomy is anathema. A change will come only if the demand from the Congress and the Muslim League becomes irresistible and the Secretary of State realises it is inevitable. Otherwise Simla will not move".

A difference cropped up between Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee on the question of the application of the policy of non-violence. While Gandhiji wanted it should be applied in all spheres of life including defence of the country, the Working Committee felt and said so in a resolution on June 21, 1940 that non-violence should be restricted to the fight for Independence and it could not be applied to defence of the country. The Committee said it was unable to go the full length with Gandhiji but recognised that he should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way and therefore absolved him from responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress had to pursue under the conditions prevailing in India and the world in regard to external aggression and internal disorder.

Jinnah in an exhibition of bad manners refused to consider a telegram sent to him on July 13, by Maulana Azad, Congress President, clarifying the Working Committee resolution on a national Government in the Centre. "I refuse to discuss with you by correspondence or otherwise," said Jinnah, "as you have completely forfeited the confidence of Muslim India. Can't you realise you are made a Muslim showboy Congress President to give it the colour that it is national and deceive foreign countries?"

The Hindu wrote: "Mr. Jinnah has broken out into a crescendo of personal abuse of a revered leader belonging to his own community, thereby skilfully as he thinks sidetracking the straight issue raised in the Congress President's question, 'is it the position of the League that she cannot agree to any provisional arrangement not based on the two nation theme?' Mr. Jinnah's reply is that of the pettifogging pleader who has no case—abuse of the other side".

On August 7, 1940, the Viceroy announced his decision to appoint representative Indians to his Executive Council and form a war advisory council. In an assurance to minorities he said it remained the policy of H.M.'s Government that full weight should be given to the views of minorities in any revision of the constitution. He added, "It goes without saying that they could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a Government".

The Viceroy said H M's Government had agreed to set up after the war a representative body of Indians to devise the framework of a new constitution.

The Hindu commenting on the announcement said "HE the Viceroy's statement announces a decision and attempts to state the reasons therefor. But if the object of the decision was to put an end to the political impasse we see little prospect of this object being achieved, while if the intention behind the laboured statement was to convince and win over Indian opinion, we must say that a worse effort in this behalf could not have been easily made".

The Hindu added: "The terms in which H M's Government have chosen to refer to the minorities problem seem calculated to prevent the emergence of that unity which the Government declare they are so anxious to bring about. For the first time in a considered statement of policy H M's Government speak as if it were axiomatic that the position not only of religious minorities but also of political minorities should be safeguarded in relation to any constitutional change. We wonder how they are going to achieve the feat of workable definition of political minorities, let alone framing workable safeguards for them... The simple truth of the matter is that while a handful of people may be bent upon holding up all progress by putting forward fantastic claims in the name of minority rights, the vast majority of the people of India want real self-determination. If Britain will not squarely face this cardinal fact, any makeshift she may resort to for the duration of the war will neither satisfy the people of India, nor serve the purpose of intensifying India's war effort which is the avowed immediate aim of the British Government, nor again eliminate those differences which they deplore. H M's Government must realise that India's co-operation can be secured only by convincing her accredited leaders that any provisional scheme that may now be introduced will give them that reality of power which alone can be an earnest of Britain's sincerity".

When the Congress Working Committee on August 22, rejected the Viceroy's offer as it fell short of its demand, The Hindu said the rejection was "inevitable". "It was not prompted by *amour propre*", it added, "but by the realisation that Britain was in no mood to treat with India as a free and equal partner and that she had besides repudiated the democratic principle which India regards as the Ark of the Covenant. As India's co-operation in the present crisis could be wholehearted and effective only on the terms which Britain had thus implicitly rejected, the Congress could not very well decide otherwise".

C. Rajagopalachari made a sporting offer to Britain in an interview to the London Daily Herald. He said if Britain would agree to form a provisional national Government at once he would persuade his colleagues in the Congress to agree to the Muslim League being invited to nominate the Prime Minister and to let him form the national Government as he considered best. The offer, according to Shiva Rao in Simla, made a great impression, particularly in Muslim League circles. One prominent leader described it as a magnificent gesture. "In any event", wrote Shiva Rao, "it is felt that the British Government cannot any longer shield itself behind the Congress-League differences after C.R.'s offer and withhold a national Government from India".

C.R. recognised, as he told a public meeting in Madras, that after the war when the constitutional issue was taken up they might have to concede Pakistan if the Muslims insisted on it. He said: "If we cannot put wisdom into people, if Muslims think they would be stronger by division than in unity, if they

should think that India would be much safer by cutting her up, that the coasts should be exposed while the north-west and north-east imagined they were quite safe and could live as separate states, if the world becomes so safe for divided nations then they can have it if they insist on it".

On September 15, 1940, the Congress Working Committee called upon Gandhiji to take over the leadership of the Congress in view of the rejection of the Congress demand by Britain. Gandhiji told the All India Congress Committee (according to the Bombay Correspondent) that he would not even press for the transfer of power at the Centre pending the conclusion of the war provided the Government released India from the war. The Hindu thought it extremely "improbable that the Viceroy, who can only act according to Britain's bidding, will agree to the terms Gandhiji proposed". The Hindu was right. The Viceroy rejected Gandhiji's request for freedom to speak against the war and the ground for individual satyagraha against the war effort was prepared.

What kind of man was Linlithgow? Gandhiji gave this pen-picture of him. "He is straight in his talk and always deliberate and economical in his language. He is never equivocal, never leaves you in doubt as to his meaning. He conveys the most unpalatable decisions with a calmness and courtesy which for the moment make you think that you have heard no harsh or hard decision. He listens to your arguments with a patience and attention I have never known any other Viceroy or high functionary to show in an equal measure. He is never ruffled and never discourteous. With all this, however, he is not to be easily moved from his position. He meets you with the decision on the matter under discussion already made. He takes care not to let you think that it is so. But there is no doubt about it that his decision is unchangeable. He is not receptive. He has amazing confidence in the correctness of his judgment. He does not believe in a gentleman's or any other agreement. He and I have become friends never to be parted, be the differences between us as great as they can be".

Unfortunately it did not happen in the way Gandhiji had mentioned in the last sentence of his statement. The situation changed so badly in 1942 when the two became disillusioned with each other, the one in authority hurling charges and abuse on the other and the one leading the freedom movement making futile efforts to clear himself of the grave charges against him and knocking his head against a stonewall which was what Linlithgow was as he correctly judged him.

When Acharya Vinoba Bhave was chosen as the first war resister on October 15, The Hindu appealed to the Government to allow him to speak against the war effort since Gandhiji had "expressly declared that the Congress has no desire to surround ammunition factories or barracks and prevent people from doing what they like and it would be the path of wisdom for the Government not to interfere in any way when an honest man like Mr. Bhave feels impelled to proclaim the faith in him. The right claimed by Gandhiji is not much wider than that which is allowed to conscientious objectors in England and the Government will be undertaking no serious risk by leaving Mr. Bhave free to propagate his views".

The veteran Moderate leader, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer did not agree with The Hindu and he described Gandhiji's individual satyagraha movement as "most foolish, ill-advised, and calculated to jeopardise the safety and best interests of the country". He added: "It is difficult to understand Mr. Gandhi's

logic or mentality. It is difficult to reconcile his goodwill to Britain and his desire not to embarrass the authorities with the plan of direct action which he has started . . . No Government, European or Indian, democratic or constitutional, which is engaged in a life and death struggle for the preservation of the country can possibly recognise any claim to impede or weaken its efforts for defence by any pacifist propaganda or otherwise To say that mere talking to dissuade people from participating in the war effort does not involve violence is absurd. One may just as well claim that it is a laudable piece of non-violence when a man prevents people from putting out a fire or saving a drowning man. Inaction under such circumstances and propaganda for such inaction is utterly immoral and involves a spirit of violence. Inaction under such circumstances is far more harmful than action and is not morally justifiable”.

As individual war resisters were arrested and sentenced, the Government imposed a Press censorship on publication of news relating to the satyagraha. Vehemently criticising the new fetters on the Press, *The Hindu* wrote. “The extremely wide scope and vague definitions of the new offence thus created will, it is obvious, leave the Press very much dependant on the caprice of the executive so far as the main justification for its existence – prompt publication of news of public interest – is concerned. The new amendment (to Defence of India Rules imposing Press censorship) will impose on them the duty to accept without discussion or question the direction of the Government that any matter mention of which the latter might choose to regard as dangerous to public interest should be automatically excluded from the newspaper. Refusal to obey this fiat will itself be an offence irrespective of the merits or demerits of the matter published”.

Among the prominent Congress leaders who were arrested all over India and sent to jail was C. Rajagopalachari who had to face a magistrate who was emotionally upset while sentencing him to a year's imprisonment. *The Hindu* had a long descriptive report about the trial. After Rajagopalachari had made a statement and pleaded guilty to the charge of obstructing war effort by writing letters to various people, the Magistrate, Mr. Abbas Ali, before sentencing him quoted a verse from the Bhagavad Gita and said as a student of the Gita himself, Mr. Rajagopalachari would realise that he (the Magistrate) was bound to do his duty. He added. “No one will rejoice more than myself when peace is declared and Mr. Rajagopalachari returns from jail and occupies the high position which he held with such distinction”. “Thank you”, replied Rajagopalachari. “I am sorry myself I have caused you a certain amount of embarrassment”.

A letter which Jawaharlal Nehru wrote from prison to his sister, Krishna Huthee Singh, fell into the hands of the Bombay Correspondent who wired it to *The Hindu* which featured it. The publication of the letter was not liked by officials in New Delhi and they made Shiva Rao aware of their displeasure. Nehru wrote in his letter: “I have been a month in prison out of 48 months. If there was any likelihood of my forgetting this, the New Moon was there to remind me for I came to prison with the New Moon. I have taken things easily this month. I wanted to get rid of the feeling of tiredness. It takes sometime to settle down. I have read and spun a great deal of goodyarn. It is surprising how many jobs can be done in prison. Cleaning, washing and generally keeping my own quarters in as decent a condition as is possible absorbs quite a deal of

time. Then, I started digging. It was hard work at first for the soil is strong and I was annoyed at myself when I found I got tired easily. I improved with practice but digging is hard exercise. Then I do Shirshasana and Sarvangasana. My body had become stiff and I could not balance it properly. I have gone back to form and every morning as the dawn is creeping, I stand gracefully on my head to welcome it. I get up very early with the stars shining away brightly out. I go to bed equally early. I am definitely thinner in the right places. You will agree it is all to the good. We must adapt ourselves to life as it is, not hunger for what it is not. Physical risk and suffering are after all petty compared to the troubles and tempests of the mind and whether life is soft or hard one can always get something out of it but to enjoy life ultimately one must decide not to count the cost".

Kasturi Srinivasan must have been worried about the treatment of Jawaharlal Nehru in prison and written to Shiva Rao for we find Shiva Rao telling his boss in a letter on February 6, 1941. "I also spoke to (Sir Richard) Tottenham (Home Secretary, Government of India) about Jawaharlal's case. He argued at first that Jawaharlal was getting in fact many more concessions than are permitted even to 'A' class prisoners. There is no restriction it seems on the number of letters that he may receive or write. I told him that while that may be true, the Superintendent of the jail seemed to be indulging in a policy of pinpricks. I told him about the thumb impression episode, and the delays in passing on to him papers connected with the Kamala Nehru Hospital and the Planning Committee. Tottenham told me for my private information that the U.P. Government have decided to transfer Jawaharlal temporarily to Lucknow Jail while certain improvements to his cell at Dehra Dun, are being effected. Tottenham protested against the publication of a private letter from Jawaharlal to his sister in the press. There was nothing objectionable in the contents of the letter, he admitted, nevertheless it was apt to give the impression that he was enduring the hardships of prison life in a large hearted manner".

The censorship order imposed on the Press by an amendment to the Defence of India Rules was withdrawn in November, 1940 owing to the efforts of the All-India Newspapers Editors' Conference which met in Delhi for the first time under the presidentship of Kasturi Srinivasan. The Government expressed its willingness to "be advised by committees of the Press at Delhi and in provincial headquarters in every action they may take".

In a communication to Editors in India published in *The Hindu* on February 1, 1941, Gandhiji disclosed that two statements of his carried by agencies were suppressed by the newspapers as they were not passed by the Press Adviser. The two statements were (1) statement regarding continuance of the C. D. movement issued on January 13; (2) statement of January 9 regarding payment of fines by satyagrahis which was not passed for publication as being a prejudicial report containing incitement to carry on anti-war civil disobedience. Gandhiji said, "We have become so used to the Press gag that we hardly know that there is a partial paralysis of the Press. In the name of war effort all honest expression of opinion if it is opposed to war efforts conceived by the official world is effectively suppressed unless an enterprising Editor or publisher risks the loss of his press. Thus my own effort, if my honesty be not questioned, is the true effort to end all war and therefore in no way anti-British or pro-German".

Gandhiji said: "For the conduct of the campaign and for the sake of even keeping it within restraint I have to issue statements from time to time. During four days two out of three such statements were suppressed". He added, "I do not want, so far as possible, to extend the scope of civil disobedience beyond the present limit. But I do not know that I can exercise that restraint if the Press abdicates its function of publishing relevant news. I therefore appeal to the Press not to succumb to the gag but to assert its independence by publishing all the satyagraha news in its fullness. Of course, it is open to the Editors to criticise and condemn the movement or the statements that may be issued. Editors may signify their disapproval of the gag by either publishing the offending statements and risking prosecution or even confiscation of the press or by stopping publication of their papers altogether by way of protest".

Gandhiji said, "I need hardly draw attention to the fact that I represent unadulterated non-violence whose spread can do nobody any harm. It is false and cruel to suggest that I could have anything in common with Nazism or Fascism because I happen to oppose imperialism".

Gandhiji's statement followed a controversy started by Mahadev Desai that the President of the All India Newspaper Editors' conference (A.I.N.E.C), K. Srinivasan, had given an assurance to the Government that they would not hinder the war effort. Srinivasan denied that any assurance had been given as suggested and this point was reiterated in a leading article in *The Hindu*.

Kasturi Srinivasan in a Press interview at Wardha on his way to Delhi on March 3, 1941, said, in what amounted to a reply to the Mahatma, that the Press should not commit suicide but fight for its liberty "as it is by fighting and not by surrendering or resigning that one can get whatever one wants or wishes to achieve".

On February 4, the A. I. N. E. C. passed a resolution moved by P. D. Sharma and seconded by Sir Francis Low requesting the Government "ordinarily not to ban publication of statements issued by Mahatma Gandhi and in cases where they are inclined to take such a step they should consult the Central Press Advisory Committee before passing any orders thereon".

On February 11, 1941, *The Hindu* suggested to the Viceroy to "take counsel in conference with the Prime Ministers of the provinces where autonomy is still functioning and with the ex-Prime Ministers of other provinces", to break the political deadlock. "If this is done", it said, "and popular Government is restored in all the provinces as a result the Prime Ministers of the "provinces could constitute themselves into a committee for thrashing out the details of the constitutional machinery that could be depended upon for ascertaining the will of the people as to the constitution that would be best for India. Such a committee would not only enjoy the confidence of the vast bulk of the people, it would have all points of view - including those of the Muslims and other minorities - adequately represented on it".

*The Hindu* said "The simultaneous introduction of substantial changes in the Government of India along the lines broadly indicated in the Poona offer of the Congress would be a necessary complement". The paper urged that the reorganisation of the Central Government of which the appointment of an Indian leader as Minister of Defence would be part "should recognise in the same manner the right of the elected representatives to a controlling voice in matters of finance and it should further favour a convention giving de facto

recognition to the principle of joint responsibility. The Government of India should be one and indivisible as now; with this important difference that while in theory it would be responsible to the Viceroy the latter and his Government should in practice acquit themselves as if they were really responsible to the people of India."

Gandhiji's mind however worked on a different plane and he created another complication in the political situation when he wrote to the *Times of India* replying to its criticism of his policy "I believe", Gandhiji said, "there can be no settlement with the Congress short of complete independence during the pendency of the war for the simple reason that the Congress cannot commit itself to active help in the war with men and money. That would mean a reversal of the policy of non-violence which the Congress has pursued for the last 20 years. And independence cannot come through any settlement while the war lasts. Therefore so far as I know the Congress will be satisfied with the fullest freedom to grow in non-violence". In the earlier part of the letter Gandhiji had said that the Poona resolution (offering support to war effort on certain conditions) had lapsed.

The Hindu took issue with Gandhiji and pointed out that while Gandhiji's approach to the question of non-violence was that of the saint and the prophet, the Congress' was that of the practical statesman. "The Congress must function primarily as a political organisation and its chief preoccupation must therefore be India's freedom. The A. I. C. C. pointed out that even for fulfilling the Congress objective of world disarmament it is necessary that the Indian people should attain the status of a free and independent nation. A nation free in this sense would have the fullest right to decide at its discretion whether to aid Britain in her war effort or not. To argue as Gandhiji does that "independence cannot come through any settlement while the war lasts because it would inevitably mean giving help to Britain and this would be against the policy of non-violence, is to circumscribe unduly the character of that freedom. If while claiming Independence, the Congress declared at Poona that it would give Britain full support it was because the vast body of Congressmen felt that a free India would in her own interest and in furtherance of her ideals act in that manner. We may take it that that is still true and we may feel assured that if Britain should summon the wisdom to offer India a fair deal the Congress will, as Maulana Azad declared on the eve of his imprisonment, be still prepared to act in the spirit of the Poona offer though it had "lapsed". Much as Gandhiji might deplore this, he will be the last person to stand in the way if the Congress should decide on such a course."

In a letter, prominently featured on the *Leader* page, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, who had resigned from the Congress mainly due to his differences with Gandhiji, called upon the Mahatma to retire from the political scene. "No spiritually minded man who worships in the shrine of Ahimsa has any need of Swaraj", Srinivasa Iyengar wrote, "for the soul of an enlightened slave in an autocracy can be as free as that of the foremost democrat in the freest of countries. But we cannot be so spiritually minded as to be indifferent to the issue when there is a war between Britain and Germany or to forget the duties of this world when there is a struggle for freedom and Independence between India and Britain. We want England to win this war and to be free of Germany and to retain her proud national existence. And we want India to

attain complete Independence, and to be free of England and to pursue our own national existence as a result of our present political struggle”.

Srinivasa Iyengar said. “The lustre of Gandhiji's life, work, name and Gospel will become far greater and more universal should he of his own accord deem it right to relinquish his leadership of Indian politics, with their inevitable dirt, dust and strife, their dissensions, animosities and corruptions, their insincerities and betrayals and their disappointments and depressions. And his influence with the leaders of the British and other peoples which today neither is real nor lasting will become greater and more effective and helpful to India herself. All patriotic and politically minded Congressmen should now realise that there can be no agreement on fundamentals between Gandhiji and themselves and should, therefore, resort to the only wise and correct method of making the Congress exclusively a political body wholly independent of Gandhiji's leadership and ideologies. Should they make again a compromise with him or seek to exploit him as they have done in the past, they are sure to find themselves following the same career of political futility as they have done through 20 tragic years”

Two other leading politicians criticised the Mahatma and wanted him to remain a saint and get out of politics. Speaking at a meeting in Madras, S Satyamurthi said that Mahatma Gandhi as a saint, leader and prophet was unexcelled but when it came to dealing with day-to-day human questions he had not been rewarded with results which perhaps lesser men might have achieved. During the Non Co-operation movement of 1920-21, Satyamurthi said he had it on the authority of the then Viceroy that the British raj came to within an ace of being defeated. Unfortunately, the Chauri Chaura incident happened and Gandhiji withdrew the movement. In 1923 the Viceroy was prepared to transfer all subjects to popular control retaining only one in order to get the co-operation of Indians in welcoming the Prince of Wales. Because the Government refused to release the Ali Brothers Gandhiji refused to come to an agreement.

B. Shiva Rao in an article in *The Hindu* in 1958 confirmed this. He said when Lord Reading, the Viceroy, was uneasy and very anxious for a quick settlement with the Congress so that the boycott of the Prince of Wales' visit could be avoided, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the then Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, suggested a way out—transfer of practically all subjects in the provinces to popular control and hastening of the pace of progress towards responsibility at the Centre in return for the withdrawal of the boycott. The Viceroy seemed agreeable; his Executive Councillors, Hailey and Sir William Vincent (strong man of the Council) were not averse. Sapru ascertained that C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru would favour negotiations for a settlement on such a basis. Gandhiji, after some initial parleys could not agree, insisting on the release of the Ali Brothers which the Viceroy and his council thought too heavy a price to pay and the move ended in failure.

Satyamurthi said if only Gandhiji had taken with him to the R. T. C. in London Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad and Azad the history of the country might have been very different. “We failed in the R. T. C. because of our own want of faith in ourselves”, he said.

Speaking at the meeting Srinivasa Sastri said many people chose to regard Gandhiji as a politician seven-eighths of him and as a saint as regards the



remaining one-eighth. Therefore when they found him saying wise things they praised him as a politician. When they found he made a mistake then they said he was a saint not caring for success but caring for the highest ideal and therefore always in the eyes of the ordinary man coming to grief. Sastri said he was always disposed to think of the Mahatma as a saint who had strayed by some blunder into politics. He judged all his sayings and all his doings by the standard and measure that they applied to the prophet of mankind. Generally speaking the Mahatma's sayings and doings rang true to the prophet's standard. Occasionally having to deal with politics which was gross and with politicians who were very human, he seemed to them to descend from the high altitudes which were his natural habitat. Therefore Sastri thought that the Mahatma would come into his own and be of the greatest possible benefit to India and to the world only when "he is the saint and saint only and when he does not touch politics and is not obliged to adapt himself to the crudeness of the world".

Delhi official comment on Gandhiji's policy statement (as reported by Shiva Rao) was it was the final rejection of the proposals for a solution of the deadlock. It was argued that resulting from Gandhiji's clarification there was no common ground left between the Congress and the Government. "Until therefore the sponsors of the Poona offer repudiate in categorical terms Gandhiji's statement and reiterate their formula for a national Government, coupling it with an offer of support in the prosecution of the war there can be, it seems, no purpose in exploring the possibilities of a settlement", Shiva Rao wrote.

A conference of non-party leaders in Bombay on March 15 urged the British Government to reconstitute the Government of India with Indian members. The Hindu appealed to Britain to accept the proposal in the spirit in which it was made. "If they do this", it said, "we feel that the Congress will not fail to respond in the same spirit". The Hindu took another major step in April when it made a powerful plea to the Congress to call off the satyagraha movement. "It is vitally necessary that the Congress should function again as a political organisation and should irrespective of what Britain may or may not do or what reactionary groups in the country might threaten, take up the active leadership of the people as a whole, call off satyagraha and mobilise their energies for positive practical purposes. It seems to us that other factors—including the serious developments in the international situation which must have their own repercussions on the question of India's defence—also go to reinforce this consideration. The limited satyagraha launched by Gandhiji cannot by the very nature of the case help very much so far as the dominant need of the country is concerned. That need is an active and robust political leadership which would weld the masses into a dynamic and irresistible power. The Congress functioning as a political organisation first and foremost is alone capable of furnishing that leadership. It must wake up to its duty without delay".

Almost the very first person to hail The Hindu's call to the Congress was Srinivasa Sastri whose letter to the Editor began with these words: "I was delighted this morning to read your editorial. My only feeling was that it was a pity it had not come earlier. The authority of The Hindu is so great that I fully hope Congressmen all over the country as well as other patriots will see the situation in its true light. Allow me to say I feel grateful to you".

Sastri added "When will they (Congressmen) put aside their obsessions and come back to this positive service of the motherland? I do not forget the Mahatma insists upon the constructive part of his programme. I do not forget that even the C.D. movement has a moral significance. But essentially when heavy sustained and high-minded work cries aloud for an army of adequately equipped workers the Congress cannot send its leaders to prison cells and condemn them to inaction. The big tale of satyagraha arrests and sentences has lost its novelty and interest. I have no hesitation in saying it is played out. I once before appealed to the leaders to come back to their accustomed sphere of activity and avowed my belief that though it involved a complete reversal of policy and a seeming confession of failure, the Mahatma and his immediate disciples were quite equal to such a radical change and would gain in prestige and power rather than lose. I would repeat that belief and sound my summons again".

Gandhiji declined to withdraw the satyagraha in an interview to the Times of India which had also urged him to do so. Commenting, The Hindu pointed out that the object of the movement, namely, India's dissociation from the war effort "has been fully achieved. Nobody whether in India or anywhere in the outside world is today under the impression that India has acquiesced in or is not indignant at having been dealt with as if she had no soul of her own or no right to make up her own mind on a matter so vitally affecting the lives, property and peace of mind of her millions".

The Hindu added. "The Congress yearns, in Gandhiji's words, to achieve India's freedom through purely non-violent effort. But satyagraha is only one mode of employing non-violence for such a purpose. If that does not achieve or show any sign of achieving the intended object within a measurable period, the Congress as a political organisation cannot afford to wait indefinitely but must perforce marshal its resources in other and more effective ways. It was under this conviction that it acted when it made what is known as the Poona offer; it was the Government's rejection of that offer that made the Congress despair of arriving at a settlement with the Government and ultimately led to the launching of satyagraha. As to Gandhiji's own attitude to the Poona offer and conviction above referred to, from which it proceeded, it should be remembered that while disassociating himself from that offer he yet earnestly advised Britain to accept it, thus conceding that as a political organisation the Congress was perfectly justified in concentrating on practical ends and using constitutional means in pursuit of those ends".

The Hindu said: "We have advocated the calling off of satyagraha in order that the Congress might recapture the political initiative it relinquished. It can then carry on a vigorous, organised and effective campaign throughout the length and breadth of the country against the reactionaries who are spreading the most mischievous doctrine calculated to undermine the public weal and the British power which finds it convenient to misrepresent the aims of the Congress and the mind of the Indian public".

M N Roy (who has already appeared in these pages earlier) in a letter to the Editor on April 26 applauded its editorial on Gandhiji's satyagraha movement and said for saying the same thing which The Hindu had now said he and his friends had become victims of disciplinary action on the charge of violating the fundamental principle and policy of the Congress. "Therefore it is only fair for

me to expect that while advising the Congress leaders to rectify their blunders you will demand that the injustice done to me and many other Congressmen for opposing these blunders before it was too late, should be also undone”.

The Editor's note under the letter was “Mr Roy in writing this letter seems to have forgotten a good deal of recent and relevant history. He did something more than criticise satyagraha or urge its withdrawal. Instead of trying to convert the Congress majority to his view, while remaining within the fold, he repudiated the Congress, proclaimed the establishment of a new party, coquetted with the anti-Congress communalists and reactionaries, proclaimed his readiness to form alternative Governments—if he did not succeed it was not for want of trying—and in all ways made clear his animus against the Congress and all it stands for”

In May, 1941, Jinnah who was resting at Nandi Hills in Mysore State issued a statement saying that the Bombay non-party leaders' conference was “engineered by the agents of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha and was intended to make the way smooth for the Congress and to enable Mr. Gandhi to give up satyagraha and return to normal politics with credit, substantial gain and victory over all others” He brought in *The Hindu* by saying “Further, the meeting of the conference and its resolutions and its proposals synchronised with the bold lead given by *The Hindu* of Madras—an out and out Congress paper—urging upon Mr. Gandhi to give up satyagraha. The conference and its resolutions were received with the deepest sympathies by the Congress Press generally”

Jinnah went on “Ordinarily the self-appointed delegates of such a conference would have been at once dubbed as non-entities and men who represented nobody. After the resolution was passed *The Hindu* gave the best certificate to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru in the following terms ‘These proposals not only constituted a considerable approximation to the Congress demand but they represented a very substantial agreement among all the progressive elements of the country’ Of course Muslim India of 100 millions, scheduled castes of 60 millions and millions of non-Brahmins of South India do not count or matter and as regards the Indian states they do not even exist” Jinnah alleged that the author of the Bombay conference resolution was C. Rajagopalachari and quoted a Press report from Tiruchī in which the Non-Brahmin leader, E. V. Ramaswami Naicker was reported to have stated that it was at the instance of K. Srinivasan, Editor of *The Hindu*, who in turn was pressed by C. Rajagopalachari, that Sapru was prevailed upon to call a conference and pass a resolution “which to all intents and purposes was drafted by C. Rajagopalachari”

Kasturi Srinivasan in a statement denied Jinnah's allegation and said, “This is the first time I have come across such a report. The allegations made therein are absolutely baseless”.

*The Hindu* declared that Jinnah's statement would not add to his political reputation and said: “Mr. Jinnah seems to have conspiracy on the brain and it is obviously useless to argue with a man so obsessed, but we have little doubt that the public will know what value to attach to his wild allegations” Referring to Jinnah's mention of its editorial, *The Hindu* said: “If Mr. Jinnah had read through the article which he does us the honour of mentioning in such complimentary terms, he would have seen that we maintained that the need for a

revision of Congress policy was the more urgent because of the Pakistan campaign initiated by him and the Muslim League in Madras. Our plea had nothing to do with the Bombay conference for we have never believed that the Congress should wait upon Britain's intentions and we have always urged that if a change of policy was called for in the country's interests it should be adopted irrespective of what Britain might or might not do."

As regards Jinnah's reference to Non-Brahmins and scheduled castes, The Hindu said: "It is yet to be demonstrated to the world's satisfaction that the Muslim League and Mr. Ramaswami Naicker hold a power of attorney from the Muslims and the scheduled classes and Non-Brahmins. And speaking of public opinion did Mr. Jinnah ascertain that all India was in favour of Pakistan before he plumed for it? Is he prepared to give up the idea if it can be shown that the bulk of Indian opinion is opposed to it?"

Incidentally, two years earlier, Jinnah declined to give a message on the occasion of the diamond jubilee of The Hindu. Salvatti wrote to the Editor: "He was not willing to give one (message) to us on the ground that he had not been reading The Hindu and therefore he did not know anything about the policy of the paper. He meant that we had not placed the President of the Muslim League on our free list while we were extending free copies to the Congress President and others." Jinnah said (Salvatti added) he would however think over the matter, if the Correspondent would write to him later. The Editor, however, instructed Salvatti not to pursue the matter.

In a spirited reply to Jinnah, Tej Bahadur Sapru after a detailed analysis of the statement and exposing its inaccuracies and fallacies and incidentally questioning his characterisation of The Hindu as an "out and out Congress paper" ("The Hindu may have sympathies with some aspects of the Congress policy but I have never looked upon it as an out and out Congress paper") concluded with these words: "Mr. Jinnah says the (Bombay) resolution is a 'worthless document intended purely for purposes of propaganda to mislead the ignorant and credulous people of India'. I know and I regret that in this country 'ignorant and credulous people' have been very much exploited by certain parties. But if the resolution was so worthless why is Mr. Jinnah wasting so much of his time and mind over it? He says he would not have taken notice of it if my name had not been associated with it. Am I to take it as a tribute to myself or as an implied insult to those of my distinguished countrymen who had assembled at Bombay? Surely this is not the spirit in which public controversies should be carried on. This is the spirit of an angry man who has too long played the part of a dictator but who realises that the challenge to his authority is daily growing and the chance of his favourite theories and schemes being accepted by others including the British are being imperilled every day."

The Bombay conference proposals, in any case, died a natural death when L. S. Amery, Secretary of State, rejected them. The Hindu wrote: "Britain simply cannot expect India any longer to believe that she is afraid to part with power in India's own interests. If chaos must come as a result of self-Government, it will come some day and India alone will have to deal with it. That is a prospect which to her is far less grim than the desperate frustration she feels confronted with Britain's policy of dealing with her as cavalierly as if she were a conquered

country under military occupation. It cannot be good for Britain either to inspire in India that feeling of futility."

At its session in Madras in April, the Muslim League changed its creed to the "achievement of Pakistan as embodied in the Lahore resolution of 1940". Describing Pakistan as a "fantastic scheme" The Hindu pointed out that its feasibility had not been established and added "Whether it is desirable to cut up India into two or more states is a matter that can be decided not by the Muslim League alone, nor by the Congress alone, nor by the Congress and the League agreeing upon such a course. It can be decided only by the people of India acting as a whole. Though Pakistan has now become part of the League's creed not one of its ardent supporters seems to have any very clear idea of what it means or implies. The Lahore resolution which is supposed to give the pith and core of the idea is so confusingly and vaguely worded that it might mean anything or nothing".

The Hindu said that if self-determination was valid for Muslims, "it is no less valid for the Sikhs and for all others who invoke it and are resolved to enforce it" and added. "Mr Jinnah and the League should realise that it is not by unilateral declaration backed by threats that they can hope to settle India's future. No settlement which has not been agreed upon and worked out by the representatives of the people of India as a whole would, as we have already said, have the slightest stability even if it should be imposed upon the country".

Tej Bahadur Sapru made an effort to promote a Gandhi-Jinnah meeting in May to settle the communal question but it failed since Jinnah said he was prepared to meet Gandhiji as a leader of the Hindus and Gandhiji said he would never see him in that capacity. In the course of letters exchanged between them, Gandhiji wrote to Sapru "I quite agree with you that we have to settle our domestic troubles ourselves, and that without thinking whether the rulers will accept our joint demands or not. Having that belief, you should know I specially went to Mr Jinnah in Bombay and had several talks; and then Subhas Babu went. But we could make no headway. You perhaps know why. Then again determined not to go to the Viceroy as strangers I invited myself to his house in Delhi and from there we went together in his car, but only to show our differences to the Viceroy. I would go again and again if I had not the knowledge that my going would cause irritation to him. I cannot crack a joke without exposing myself to being misunderstood. My impression is he does not want a settlement till he has so consolidated the League position that he can dictate his terms to all the parties concerned including the rulers. I do not blame him for having taken up that position if he has. But with this impression it is useless for me to approach him. I often feel like writing to him but lose courage when it comes to the point of taking up my pen".

This is what Sapru thought of Pakistan in a letter to Gandhiji. "I believe the word 'Pakistan' is a convenient phrase which has been adopted by the Muslim League to cover a multitude of political and constitutional ideas. If it means partition of India, then I do not mind saying I am very strongly opposed to it. If it means a reconsideration of certain political ideas and re-adjustment of some constitutional provisions, then I should not rule out their discussion".

In June The Hindu renewed its plea to Gandhiji to call off the satyagraha movement. It said the movement had no such wide aim as winning of Swaraj for India. "In actual practice it has come to be looked upon as a mode of

spiritual discipline for a select few while the characteristically political activities of the Congress have been more or less in abeyance and are in danger of atrophy by neglect"

The Hindu said. "It is the more surprising that he (Gandhiji) does not seem to realise the possibility of the Congress movement for self-government being sidetracked indefinitely in favour of what can only be described as a private experiment in the assertion of ultimate moral values, though we may freely admit that in such a venture there may possibly be present the seeds of a revolutionary movement fraught with immense possibilities for humanity at large. The Congress, it is plain, has a paramount obligation to itself and to the people who have given it their confidence. It should refuse to write itself down for a political cipher"

In a statement on one of the many speeches of Amery in the House of Commons on India Gandhiji gave a hint of his line of thinking and foreshadowed the "Quit India" demand which the Congress was to make in the following year. He said: "I admit there is unfortunately an unbridgeable gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League. Why do not British statesmen admit that it is after all a domestic quarrel? Let them withdraw from India and I promise that the Congress and the League and all the parties will find it to their interest to come together and devise a home-made solution for the government of India. It may not be scientific, it may not be after any western pattern, but it will be durable. It may be that before we come to that happy state of affairs we may have to fight among ourselves. But if we agree not to invite the assistance of any foreign power, the trouble will last perhaps a fortnight and it will not mean even one day's destruction of human heads such as goes on in Europe today for the simple reason that thanks to British rule we are wholly unarmed"

The Hindu described Gandhiji's statement as charged with "such emotion as he rarely puts into his public utterances". It said that the Congress should not allow itself to be ignored. It had to consider its duty to the electorate. It added: "The simple truth is that the British Government as it is constituted today understands only *real politik* and is obviously basking in the comfortable conviction that the Congress has reduced itself to a cypher and may therefore be disregarded as of no account. And we must say with all respect, as we have said before, that Britain will not be forced to sit up and take notice so long as the Congress maintains the attitude which Gandhiji says he authoritatively interpreted after the revocation of the Poona offer by declaring that 'the British Government could not at the present moment grant or declare India's independence and that therefore for the time being we should be satisfied with complete freedom of speech and pen'. India must not whether on the plea of not wishing to embarrass Britain or on any other consideration default in her duty to herself—to press with all the strength at her command for the immediate transference to herself of the reality of power, war or no war. It is in order that the Congress may regain the initiative in this matter that we have been urging that the Satyagraha movement should be called off as it has sidetracked the main political issue. For the same reason it is difficult to accept the proposition that if Mr Amery's "No" to the Bombay conference demands should be final we should while regretting it, acquiesce in it and concentrate on restoring the Congress to power in the provinces. The very developments

which seem likely, owing to the turn the war is taking and their probable reactions on our domestic problems, emphasise the paramount need for the people's leaders securing a decisive voice in the Central Government. As all power and all authority is today concentrated in that Government, so long as that Government remains irresponsible and autocratic, popular Governments in the provinces would not by themselves be able to do much, either by way of safeguarding popular liberties and India's interests or of ensuring peace, order and good Government in the country."

During the period between February and July, 1941, Kasturi Srinivasan was active behind the scenes meeting the Viceroy and political leaders in order to promote a settlement of the political deadlock. He had a long conversation with the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow in Delhi on February 4 on the political situation. He showed the Viceroy a formula prepared by Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Punjab Premier, for a political settlement. "The Viceroy apparently said", Shiva Rao wrote, "that he was generally attracted by these proposals but could not commit himself without reference to London". The essence of Sikander's proposals was that a representative committee, which would consist of Premiers and ex-Premiers of the provinces, should draft a constitution on the basis of full Dominion Status on the understanding that no solution would be excluded from the purview of the committee in the drafting of the constitution. The formula also provided for formation of coalition ministries in the provinces and a reconstitution of the Central Government with the transfer of all subjects to Indians with certain conditions. Sikander told Shiva Rao that if a man like C. Rajagopalachari supported the scheme he would be prepared to go to the Viceroy and request him to go ahead with a solution on these lines. Shiva Rao said Kasturi Srinivasan had reasons to believe that C. R. would be prepared to support the scheme. The Viceroy was in a pessimistic frame of mind and confessed to Srinivasan that he was "heartily ashamed" of himself for having relied so completely on Jinnah's support. He expressed the view that Jinnah was at first only using Pakistan as a bargaining counter. He now realised that Jinnah meant "to stick to Pakistan as a definite demand". The Viceroy expressed "anxiety not to leave for his successor a problem bigger than he found it himself".

Kasturi Srinivasan discussed the constitutional issue with the Chief Justice of the Federal Court, Sir Maurice Gwyer and, according to Shiva Rao, Sir Maurice entirely agreed with Srinivasan that the most hopeful line of advance would be to take the existing Government of India Act as it stood and make modifications.

Shiva Rao told Tej Bahadur Sapru in a letter on February 22, 1941, that Sikander had asked him to ascertain (1) whether the Viceroy would be willing to encourage a peace move on the lines of his formula, (2) whether Rajaji would agree to come into the Central Cabinet. Shiva Rao said in regard to (1) he had been told by people who had met the Viceroy in the last few days that he was most unwilling to take any positive steps towards solving the deadlock. "Apparently he has the full support of the British Cabinet because I was told by one of those who recently saw him that there is a new air of authority in his voice which was not there before. I have conveyed this to Sikander. Nevertheless, he thinks that if he has encouragement from Rajagopalachari he is still willing to try. So far as Rajagopalachari is concerned, my Editor saw him

yesterday and telephones to me to say that he is favourably inclined towards Sikander's proposals and in fact would like him to go ahead. But he fears that Gandhiji will not agree to any Congressmen taking office and helping positively in the war effort".

Shiva Rao met Jinnah on February 26 but drew a blank. Jinnah frankly told him he was not prepared to be drawn into a discussion of the Muslim League demand with any one except Gandhiji or any other Hindu leader. He was not prepared to meet Azad or any Muslim on behalf of the Congress. Shiva Rao also saw Khaliquzzaman, prominent League leader of the United Provinces. "He was very bitter about the treatment he had received from Jawaharlal", Shiva Rao wrote, "and maintained that he was a staunch Congressman for 20 years but had been driven into the Muslim League by the arrogance of the Congress leaders in the U.P. At the same time I could see he is not at all happy with Jinnah's barren and uncompromising policy. In fact he asked me to see Jinnah and suggest (but not to reveal that it came from him) that Hindus and Muslims should work together for 15 years and if at the end of the period the experiment should prove a failure then the Muslims would be free to demand Pakistan. No occasion arose for discussing this or any other point with Jinnah for the reason I have given".

Kasturi Srinivasan had another interview with the Viceroy in Simla early in June, 1941. Reporting this to Sapru Shiva Rao wrote "K. Srinivasan had a fairly lengthy interview with the Viceroy. He was told in strict confidence that some statement is getting ready but whether it will be made by the Viceroy or by Amery one cannot yet tell. Mr. Srinivasan came away with the impression that while there may be a fresh effort made there is a growing tendency to regard India as unfit for democracy of the British type. I believe Amery is seriously considering whether the American model will not work better in this country. The Viceroy referred in his conversation with K. S. to the question of the time limit within which Dominion Status would be established in India". Shiva Rao gave more details of the interview in a letter to Sir Jagadish Prasad, member of the Viceroy's Council. He told him the following points emerged from the interview. (1) There is no objection to the Congress resuming office in the provinces after the withdrawal of C. D. (2) It is not true that the British have been watching with cynical satisfaction the failure of Indian leaders to bring about a Hindu-Muslim settlement. Since however such an impression has grown in India a statement may shortly be made to clarify the position. It is likely to be stated that the British Government themselves may impose a settlement of the communal question failing agreement among Indian leaders themselves. (3) The Bombay conference was unwise to have pressed for a time limit within which Dominion Status would be conferred on India. (4) The British would welcome sincerely and heartily Gandhiji's withdrawing the C. D. movement. The Hindu's recent suggestion to that effect is greatly appreciated but whether the Viceroy himself should write to Gandhiji on those lines is a point which is under consideration. K. S. also saw the Home Member, the Commander in Chief, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan and a number of officials. "The general impression with which he has left Simla is that an early move is contemplated", Shiva Rao said.

On July 21, 1941, the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council was announced by the appointment of seven more Indians and also the constitu-



tion of a war advisory council. The Hindu declared the expansion of the Viceroy's Council was a "caricature" of the demand made by the Bombay conference and added "what the country is now concerned to demonstrate is that the expansion of the Viceroy's Council does not mean the transfer of an iota of real power, that it will not promote by a hair's breadth the unforced and hearty co-operation of India in the terrible struggle in which Britain is engaged and that far from lulling opposition inside the country, it is bound to increase bitterness and discontent a hundred times by demonstrating once again the Britisher's unblest genius for sowing dissension and manoeuvring for position in the eternal game of breaking to the heart promises made to the ear. . . India will not forget that the expanded council which comes six years after the hatching of the still-born Federation gives her a far less effective voice in her own affairs than even that starveling would have vouchsafed to her. And she will not forget the insult easily"

The Nagpur Correspondent interviewed Gandhiji on the expansion of the Viceroy's Council and the Mahatma's comment was "The announcement does not affect the stand taken by the Congress, nor does it meet the Congress demand to any extent"

The Hindu appealed to the new Executive Councillors to address themselves to the task of restoring "normal conditions in which normal political activity will be possible. Not only should they press for the wholesale release of all political prisoners, they should insist on the Government taking up towards the communal problem a new proper and helpful attitude which would lead to an early solution. . . Now that the Government of India is numerically at least a predominantly Indian Government, it should give tangible proofs to show that whatever may have been the case in the past, there will not be the slightest justification for impeaching its bonafides in this respect. If the new Executive Councillors succeed in impressing upon their colleagues the need for adopting an earnest and constructive attitude towards the communal problem on the basis that the essential unity of India must be maintained at all costs, the other task that awaits them of preparing the way for far reaching constitutional changes will be rendered much easier. Their success will be judged by their ability to modify the British policy in these vital respects"

In another appeal to them in September, The Hindu urged that the new councillors should "impress on the powers that be that the objects underlying the new changes will not be achieved and they, for their part, would be simply wasting their time at Delhi and Simla, if an earnest effort were not made forthwith to enable the new council in its working to approximate as far as possible to a national Government".

The Hindu made a fresh appeal in October to Gandhiji to call off the Satyagraha movement. It said that "realising the plight of the country and the direction in which the thoughts of all progressive elements are moving, he should advise the Congress to revise its policy if it should be convinced that a change is called for in the best interests of the country. Mahatmaji has at critical times in the past given a new impulse to Congress activities by such unconventional and great hearted leadership and we trust he will see that the time is ripe for another such change".

To Congressmen The Hindu said they "must not flinch from their responsibility for inducing the Congress to alter its course to suit the new and changed conditions with which we are confronted".

On December 4, 1941, the Government of India announced their decision to release all political prisoners including Nehru and Azad, "whose offences have been formal and symbolic in character" Shiva Rao wrote from Delhi "At long last, 17 days after the debate in the Central Assembly on Mr N M Joshi's resolution (calling for release of political prisoners) comes the communique, cold and halting as all official documents are, announcing the release of all those C D prisoners whose offences were merely formal or symbolic in character. Even to obtain this half-hearted gesture, Indian members of the Executive Council have had to make sustained efforts, sometimes it was a recalcitrant provincial Governor or two, who saw disaster in a wholesale jail delivery, sometimes it was a member of the British Cabinet But while Sir Reginald Maxwell (Home Member) was saying that the matter lay in the discretion of the provincial Governments and Mr Amery disclaimed all responsibility, cabled correspondence was going on for days and weeks with the result which is announced this morning It would be fanciful to suggest that those who worked for immediate release feel greatly thrilled by the results of their endeavours"

The Hindu was disappointed too at the "belated and half-hearted" gesture and asked why the amnesty should be restricted to C D prisoners alone It felt the Government "should not have stopped short of ordering the release of all classes of political prisoners—be they convicted prisoners or detenus—who have not been guilty of violence".

Gandhiji was not impressed either but for a different reason In November he had said in a statement issued at Wardha in which he referred to reports in the Press of a move to release Satyagrahi prisoners and said so far as he knew "there will be on the part of the Congress neither appreciation of nor response to any such gesture by the Government Those who may be discharged will have to be invited to re-offer civil disobedience if they are physically fit" When approached by The Hindu Correspondent Gandhiji said he held the same view as before and "so far as I am concerned it cannot evoke a single responsive or appreciative chord in me".

On December 7, 1941, Japan launched a war on the U. S. A. and Britain by attacking Pearl Harbour and landing troops in North Malaya and the whole situation in the Far East took a dramatic turn. The Hindu said "Japan has followed the now familiar Hitlerian technique . . . The Japanese have shown themselves such perfect adepts in the art of dissimulation and bargaining that they have succeeded, as events have proved, in putting their opponents off their guard and in effectively securing the initiative The swift, sudden and heavy blows which Japan had inflicted on U. S. bases will doubtless be duly avenged but there is no denying that in the first round the advantage is with her"

As the Congress Working Committee met in Bombay in the shadow of the war approaching the shores of India, The Hindu declared that the "Congress must either govern or function as the opposition. It must not hibernate". The paper said "The all important thing is that the Congress should at this critical hour in the nation's history take up again the active leadership of the nation That position imposes obligations as well as rights It must take the initiative in showing a way out of the political impasse. If it believes—as Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru himself seems to believe—that the Poona offer presents such a solution

it should not be deterred from making to Britain an offer again in the same spirit, throwing the onus on her to reject the proffered hand once again if she should so choose. There is nothing wrong or undignified in repeating such an offer simply because it was turned down once before."

On December 30, while the Congress Working Committee was in session Gandhiji in a letter to the Congress President Azad said "In the course of the discussion in the Working Committee I discovered that I had committed a grave error in the interpretation of the Bombay resolution. I had interpreted it to mean that the Congress was to refuse participation in the present or all wars on the ground principally of non-violence. I found to my astonishment that most members differed from my interpretation and held that the opposition need not be on the ground of non-violence. On re-reading the Bombay resolution I found that the differing members were right and that I have read into it a meaning which its letter could not bear. The discovery of the error makes it impossible for me to lead the Congress in the struggle for resistance to war effort on the ground that non-violence was not indispensable. I could not for instance identify myself with opposition to war effort on the ground of ill-will against Britain. The resolution contemplated material association with Britain in the war effort as a price for guaranteeing independence for India. If such was my view and I believed in the use of violence for gaining Independence and yet refused participation in the effort as the price of Independence, I would consider myself guilty of unpatriotic conduct. It is my certain belief that only non-violence can save India and the world from self-extinction. Such being the case I must continue my mission, whether I am alone or assisted by an organisation or individuals. You will therefore please relieve me of the responsibility laid upon me by the Bombay resolution".

The Congress Working Committee recognised "the validity" of the points Gandhiji had raised and therefore relieved him of the responsibility devolving on him under the Bombay resolution. The Committee added that the Bombay resolution still held good.

In an interview to *The Hindu Correspondent* at Bardoli, Gandhiji said "The Congress has now through the Working Committee made it clear that the door is not barred altogether against Congress participation (in the war effort) certainly not on the ground of non-violence. The key for unlocking the door remains principally in the hands of the British Government. The Working Committee has very properly declined to state the terms on which the door can be opened. It will depend upon varying circumstances but in my opinion the chief circumstance is the Government. Having been insulted often enough the Working Committee would not court any further insult by making any offer".

The *Hindu* welcomed the Congress Executive's decision and said "It means the Congress will function once again primarily as a political organisation, that it will not refuse to face up to any of the responsibilities that the leadership of a great people involves and that the action it takes in pursuit of its aims will be based on a realistic appreciation of the kaleidoscopic changes that the country is passing through with reference both to the internal situation and external developments. The Congress decks are thus cleared for action. It will no longer be possible for Britain to seek to hide her failure to secure India's co-operation by pointing to the Satyagraha movement as the insuperable obstacle. Nor can she invoke the Congress policy of non-violence as a pretext for suggesting that

in no circumstances will the Congress be prepared to co-operate in the war effort"

Tej Bahadur Sapru and 12 other Liberals including Srinivasa Sastri in a cable to Churchill (British Premier) on January 3, 1942, urged immediate action in India. They suggested the conversion or expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council into a truly national Government consisting entirely of non-officials representing all parties and communities, restoration in the provinces of popular Governments or failing this non-official executive councils responsible to the Crown as in the Centre

The Hindu criticised the plea in the Liberals' cable for the setting up of non-official executive councils responsible to the Crown in the Congress Provinces "Far from being an indication of Britain's readiness to grant the reality of power in all spheres that would amount to an official registering of the disingenuous plea that has been put forward in certain quarters that provincial autonomy has proved unworkable"

Shiva Rao in a dispatch from Delhi said "It is understood that the full text of the appeal of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other Liberal leaders was cabled out to Washington to reach Mr Churchill there on Friday and copies were sent simultaneously both to Mr Amery and the Viceroy It is generally known that a number of Indian members of the Executive Council are in full agreement with the proposals contained in the document Twenty-five years ago, Sir S Subramania Aiyer, Ex-Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, addressed a private letter to President Wilson which Mr Montagu brought back to India This time though the appeal goes to Washington it is primarily intended for the British Prime Minister but being a public document it will doubtless attract notice Hopes are still entertained that Mr. Churchill may suitably respond"

But the man who said he had not become the Prime Minister to "liquidate the British Empire" was unlikely to respond He had made that statement in the British Parliament in September, 1941, making it clear that the Atlantic Charter (joint declaration by President Roosevelt and himself) did not apply to India and other parts of the Empire. The Hindu commenting then had written "Mr. Churchill has at last broken his sepulchral silence on India But for all the comfort his speech will bring to the people of this country or the peace and contentment it will bring to Britain's Empire he had far better not spoken at all That he has spoken as he has done will surprise nobody in India His blindness to the realities in this country is impenetrable and there is little doubt that though he may win the war for Britain he would lose the peace if he had his way. He would do his best to restore the *status quo* with all its age-long inequalities, injustices and slaveries. And the wonder is that President Roosevelt speaking for the great Western democracy should have so completely failed to grasp the central fact The eloquence that he lavishes on the "four freedoms" seems artificial in the context of Mr Churchill's blatant declaration that the so-called Atlantic Charter was never intended to apply to India, Burma or the other non-self-governing parts of the British Empire Mr Churchill makes it clear that President Roosevelt unlike his predecessor of the world war era has put his signature to the eight-point declaration knowing full well that it is a fraud. The American nation has no cause to be proud of its leadership in this great crisis in human history"

When the Atlantic Charter was signed on August 14, 1941, The Hindu wrote "If President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill really believe in their eight points the former should insist and the latter should agree to India being treated as the first beneficiary" The Hindu said that if the declaration was really to be fruitful, Roosevelt should demand that Britain fulfil her reiterated pledges to India at once and without reservation. "India for her part would welcome an impartial commission of enquiry sent from America for the purpose of ascertaining the real state of affairs in this country. If territorial or other aggrandisement is wrong refusal to relinquish control over lands which belong to another people who wish to be free is equally wrong. And the negative obligation recognised by Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt not to force any territorial changes in the teeth of popular opposition connotes a positive obligation to redress the wrongs of the past, mediate as well as immediate"

In another editorial on Churchill The Hindu pointed out that a strong industrialised free India would have proved a tower of strength to Britain at the critical time which faced it. "Mr. Churchill is temperamentally averse to parting with power. And so far as India is concerned, he is under no compulsion to subordinate his inclination to his judgment. Parliament is apathetic though a handful of members feel this apathy fatal and India in Mr. Churchill's view, may be safely ignored. But if he had been less self-opinionated and more imaginative he would have known that by refusing to conciliate India, he was doing his own country a far greater disservice than he is doing India herself. The long tale of misfortunes, misadventures and mistakes in the Far East that he retailed has a moral that could be expressed in one word—India".

The Hindu said that India would have been in a position to supply greater material, and manpower support if her industries had been developed and added. "When for more than a generation India was pleading that she should be allowed to develop a strong merchant navy as a second line of defence nobody paid heed to this. Why, even after the war began, how consistently have vested interests for whom the British Government have a soft corner been blocking the efforts of Indian industrialists to establish a shipping industry. Such an industry might have powerfully supplemented the output of Britain's own dockyards. And what is true of shipping is true of practically every other vital need. India could have supplied not only her own needs but also a very considerable part of the needs of Britain and the Allies if a consistent and unblemished policy of distrust had not been responsible for the suppression of Indian enterprise and initiative in these fields"

Referring to Indian troops, The Hindu said: "All the world knows the worth of India's fighters. But magnificent as the quality and considerable the quantity of India's fighting force are, an army ten times as strong would be in the field tomorrow if India had her own Government responsible to her own people"

When Singapore fell to the Japanese on February 15, 1942, The Hindu wanted to know what was being done "here and now to organise the people to safeguard India against the menace that knocks at her doors. But Mr. Churchill does not seem to be so much as conscious that such a question is being asked. The simple truth is that there is only one way of answering that question and Mr. Churchill has never liked to contemplate that way. It is as plain as anything can be that in the terrible predicament in which India finds herself today no possible help that the Allies might muster could avail her half as much as would

the determined will of her own people if they could only feel freedom coursing their veins"

On February 17, the Madras Government said in a press note "With the fall of Singapore there has been some increase in the danger of an attack on Madras from the sea. While the Government do not consider the risk so great as to require any one to leave the city, they think that in order to avoid rush and confusion in the event of an attack, anyone who has no business to keep him in the city and who intends to leave if the danger becomes acute should leave as soon as he conveniently can"

The Hindu suggested that the schools and colleges in the city should be closed so that parents and guardians "who remain in the city solely for the education of their wards and children can leave the city. There is no point in telling them they may go unless it is made possible for them to take their children along with them"

An official spokesman in New Delhi was quoted as saying on February 20 that the "war is now definitely at India's doors and we may have a difficult time in India for the next few months until the daily growing strength of the Allies makes itself felt and we take to the offensive" The spokesman added "It may be that Japan will decide to launch seaborne raids against India. We have to realise the Indian east coast is 2000 miles long against which so long as Japan has the initiative for the time being they can strike. The problem of dealing with such a large area is a big one. There is however no reason why Japan could not land parties in India if they intend to do so"

In a letter to Sapru in March, 1942, Shiva Rao said "I have met both Wavell (Commander-in-Chief) and the new Chief of the Air Force in India in the last few days. They seemed to me to take a very realistic view of the situation. The possibilities of a seaborne invasion of certain parts of India are not remote and it is not expected that the British will be able to prevent Japanese landings. Reinforcements have been poured into India during the last few weeks and our position both in regard to equipment and aircraft has improved considerably in consequence".

A hint that Britain might after all be making a move in regard to India was given by the London Correspondent who cabled on March 1, 1942: "It is obvious after Sir Stafford Cripps' assurance of pending Cabinet decision that we have heard the last of Mr. Amery's vapourings. While it is useless to anticipate the precise character of the new proposals, it is safe to assume that they will envisage some form of Dominion Status. Even Liberal and Labour circles still think in terms of Dominion Status and Commonwealth and fail to grasp the fundamental justice of the argument that India must decide her own destiny for good or ill"

**D** ID SITA, RAMA'S consort, lie and if so was it pardonable? This was the controversy that raged in the columns of The Hindu for many weeks in November and December 1941. The two politicians who started it all were S. Satyamurthi and V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. They were discussing the political situation at a meeting in Madras. Satyamurthi who spoke on Gandhiji's message contended there were occasions when speaking the truth they would do much more harm than good. There was the classic example, he said, of Sita denying to her guards any knowledge of who Hanuman was though she had been speaking to him a moment before. To the extent to which Mahatma Gandhi had taken politics from the realm of the dubious to the realm of the frank he had done great service to India and the world. They must speak the truth as often as they could, consistent with the promotion of human happiness. There might be Harischandras but he thought the fate of Harischandra was a warning.

Srinivasa Sastri said Satyamurthi seemed to think that upon occasions of great danger they might practise a slight economy with regard to truth. It was a very dangerous thing to suppose that when "you are encompassed by evil you can surmount it by evil". It was a temptation, Sastri said, which came even to good people and "poor Sita" succumbed to it. He would say that Sita was a distinct warning to them. She tried to escape by means of a lie but she did not succeed.

Two letters which appeared the next day on the subject were from Dr. R. Nagaraja Sarma and K. S. Ramaswami Sastri. Nagaraja Sarma said that the sastras allowed five types of untruth or lie and Sita's came under the category of danger to life. Ramaswami Sastri said that Sita had "cleverly, adroitly, honestly and honourably" reconciled her loyalty to truth with her loyalty to her saviour who was in danger of his life.

Srinivasa Sastri in a reply to Dr. Nagaraja Sarma said, "Our scriptures do not command us ever to depart from the truth. Yudhisra was once guilty of equivocation and the books say he was punished for it". Referring to Ramaswami Sastri's argument he said that he would prefer to use the word "natural" and "human". "Honourable", he said, "is legitimate if applied to the motive. But "honest" is out of place as a description of her statement. "At the risk of shocking some persons", Sastri said, "I shall add this. Sita's character is

edifying, adorable, grand though it be not perfect in every particular I even doubt that any character portrayed in a poem can be perfect"

The argument went on. One retired Sessions Judge wrote. "The fact is that Valmiki sometimes represents Rama and Sita as divine beings and sometimes as ordinary beings like ourselves. In this instance he makes Sita behave as any other woman placed in similar circumstances would. He shows us not the ideal Sita but the worldly wise, the Sita who wished to preserve Hanuman's identity a secret by saying he may be a Rakshasa in disguise. She failed in this as the sequel shows"

A woman reader wrote "I would maintain that in the light of the Upanishadic definition Sita's statement was not an untruth that required justification but was in perfect accord with truth. If Hanuman's identity had been revealed a chain of terribly evil consequences would have resulted"

And there we shall leave the debate for we have another equally interesting controversy in the columns of *The Hindu* to record

This was when in September, 1941, *The Hindu* commented adversely on a proposal at a conference in Chidambaram that only Tamil songs should be sung in music concerts. *The Hindu* said the proposal if implemented would mean a ban on songs in other languages like Telugu and Canarese which had produced composers like Thyagaraja and Purandaradasa. *The Hindu* carried letters for and against the proposals for several days

Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar of Chettinad whose sponsorship of the proposal started the controversy defended it at a music conference in Madras in October. He said. "My only desire was to give a special impetus to the composition of Tamil songs and the revival of old Tamil songs. I felt as hundreds of others have felt that there ought to be more songs in Tamil and more songs in Tamil sung at our concerts than is the case at present. I love music. I love to hear its sweet strains. Even wordless elaborations please me. But words set to music please me more. I long to hear songs the meaning of which I can understand. I feel specially thrilled when I listen to Tamil songs sung with fervour and feeling. Alapana and Pallavi elaborations are all right up to a point. But they are not the whole of music. They may suffice for the cultivated few though even of that I am not sure. But for the common man words of feeling sung with feeling are absolutely necessary. And if words are necessary they must be words which the common man can understand, not words in an unfamiliar tongue".

*The Hindu* welcomed the appeal of the President of the Music Academy festival, Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu, in December to Tamil and Telugu music lovers to learn both languages and said: "That is not too much to ask of the music lover especially if we remember that the Telugu of Thyagayya for instance is so simple that most people who are ignorant of the language will have no difficulty in following the general drift of his Kritis if it is once explained. While it would certainly add to our enjoyment if we could know the meaning it would be foolish to deny ourselves on the plea that we are ignorant of the language, the unique pleasure that the music of the masters can give, a pleasure beyond the bounds of mere meaning. Appeal to the intellect there undoubtedly is in music; but melody as distinct from meaning has a higher appeal. It gives voice to aspirations which normally transcend speech"



"Magistrate turns politician" Under this heading *The Hindu* carried a story from its Gudur Correspondent in February, 1941 of the Joint Magistrate of the town, R. Galletti I C S, addressing a meeting of Congressmen assembled to witness the offering of individual satyagraha by a Congressman. Mr. Galletti, the report said, walked in while a Congressman was criticising the way in which Mr. Galletti was conducting the trials of satyagrahis and the irrelevant questions he put to the accused. Mr. Galletti addressing the gathering said that it was with a view to understanding their viewpoint and to discuss questions with them that he in his court gave the satyagrahis an opportunity to give out their ideas but the prisoners refused to answer nor would they enter into a discussion in court. He said he would honour men of character though they were misguided and expose those to ridicule who lacked it. There were a few sincere Congressmen, he said, but most lacked honesty. Many of them including leaders like Maulana Azad and Mr. Rajagopalachari were inconsistent. Mr. Galletti told the Congressman who was getting ready to court arrest by shouting anti-war slogans that he would not be arrested and that he might walk to Delhi shouting slogans.

In a biting and sarcastic attack on the Magistrate under the heading "Magistrate on the flying trapeze", *The Hindu* wrote "Mr. Galletti when he started his adventures among satyagrahis was something of a joke. And he obviously enjoyed himself. Possibly, he does so still, we do not know. But the public is no longer amused by his antics nor can it overlook him as a harmless bore. For unlike most private bores, Mr. Galletti is pleasantly conscious of his authority as dispenser of justice—of his own peculiar brand—and of the magisterial privilege of laying about him with the buttend of abuse when the pistol of argument misfires. The law of contempt, if not divinity, doth still hedge a magistrate, which no doubt explains why the amenities in Mr. Galletti's court have been mostly unilateral, though possibly his eccentricities suggested that touch of inspiration before which men have always done reverence. The ancients, Mr. Galletti will remember, pictured justice as blind, they never gave her squint eyes. But he himself does not seem to have heard of the elementary rule that judge and prosecutor should not be one, nor of the other commonplace that the judge should not become a law unto himself any more than the man whom he tries. In his evangelical zeal for saving the souls of the politically misguided, he seems to have thought himself permitted alternatively to pray and curse, threaten and cajole, sneer and grow maudlin, impale his victim on Morton's fork and souse him in the purest milk of satyagraha *a la* Galletti. And now not content with such easy success he has turned peripatetic tub-thumper, shouting through his big megaphone, and the irony of it is that while he derides the satyagrahis for repeating somebody else's slogans he himself mouths with infinite relish slogans which are far older and far less true. As he is obviously unable to see the impropriety of a magistrate functioning like a vaudeville artist, it is high time that the Government transferred him to a sphere more suited to his talents and tastes. To Mr. Galletti himself a word of friendly advice would not be amiss. As a keen student of the old fabulists he should be familiar with the story of our simian cousin in the Panchatantra which in its zeal for setting the world to rights came to grief with a wedge. Moral: the Cobbler should stick to his last."

Almost a year previously another European official figured in the columns of *The Hindu*. In a speech at the Government Indian Medical School, the Surgeon-General to the Madras Government, Major-General N. M. Wilson, said the country must take the middle path as between Allopathy and Ayurveda. Those concerned with medicine must consider both the systems. After all the doctors—in the east as in the west—were the servants of the public and the patients would give them praise if they got cured no matter by what system of medicine the cure was effected. *The Hindu* said by espousing the cause of the Indian systems, “Major-General Wilson has rendered a distinct service.” Two days later *The Hindu* published a letter from the secretary to the official denying that the Surgeon-General had made any such remarks as reported in *The Hindu* and on which the editorial was based. *The Hindu*’s reply was a footnote to the letter: “Our comments were based on our report of the speech the accuracy of which we have no reason to doubt.”

Letters to *The Hindu* were not always harbingers of peace. Some of them got the paper into trouble. *The Hindu* referred to this aspect of a newspaper’s worry in an editorial note in October, 1941: “Among the minor worries of a newspaper is the hoaxed letter to the Editor. Its contents may be anything from the tearful obituary notice on an allegedly departed pedagogue (from the pen of a pupil with a failing for practical jokes—and a grievance against his teacher) to deliberate concoctions over forged signatures calculated to discredit somebody by misrepresentation. The trained eye of an experienced sub-editor detects most of these attempts from internal evidence in the letters themselves. Where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the authenticity of a communication efforts are made to verify its accuracy, but this is not always possible in a daily newspaper where one has to race against time. And so it happens that occasionally a counterfeit news item is unwittingly put into circulation but sure enough like a bad shilling it turns up again—in the form of a contradiction from the party concerned. The teacher whose periodical and premature demise is announced in a paper might content himself with writing to the Editor that “news of his death is greatly exaggerated.” A contradiction in the paper with a handsome apology settles the matter but not in every case. There is the person whose name has been taken in vain and who will insist on setting the law in motion. Which means that if he succeeds in the suit the newspaper in question will be mulcted in damages.”

Two years after writing this, *The Hindu* fell into the pit again. On August 31, 1943, it published a contradiction prominently in top of column from its Coimbatore Correspondent under the heading “Mr. C. Raghunathan. A false report contradicted.” The report said: Our Coimbatore Correspondent wires to say that the announcement appearing in the advertisement columns of *The Hindu* on page two of the issue dated August 30 stating that Mr. C. Raghunathan, Deputy Controller, Air-Raid Precautions, Coimbatore, died of heart failure at his office is false and malicious and that he is very much alive. We gladly publish the contradiction and hasten to explain that the letter asking us to publish the announcement was received by us in circumstances in which we had no reason to doubt its authenticity or bonafides. It was written on A.R.P. stationery and was signed by a person purporting to hold a responsible position in that organisation. We offer our sincere apologies to Mr. C. Raghunathan and his friends for having unwittingly published a false report.”

We must now take up the narrative of the political story from where we had left it. On March 11, 1942 it was announced by Winston Churchill in Parliament that Sir Stafford Cripps was being sent to India on a special mission to seek agreement on Government's proposals for India. The Hindu wrote, "Mr Churchill's statement is too guardedly worded to warrant any confident guess as to the precise scope of the proposals Sir Stafford Cripps has been authorised to take as the starting point for his negotiations. But it betokens a realisation by the Government that a new approach to the Indian problem is called for on their part. Whether the British Government's proposals when they are published will show that that Government have nerved themselves to a bold departure from the age-long tradition of a niggling and belated concession is of course more than we can say. But Mr Churchill's statement does indicate a new anxiety on Britain's part to come to grips with the problem which is in refreshing contrast with the policy of drift which has brought the country to the present pass."

The Hindu added "Of all British statesmen, Sir Stafford by his training, his outlook and his antecedents is best fitted for the mission which has been entrusted to him. We know he wishes well of India and we are sure he realises that an early settlement with this country is Britain's best shield. We trust he will do his best to promote such a settlement and we wish him Godspeed in his endeavours."

The Hindu advised the princes, in another editorial, that "instead of harping in season and out of season on their sovereign rights which are entirely dependent on Britain's will they (the princes) should have the courage and the foresight to take their stand with the people of British India, as only so can they ensure for themselves an equal and honoured place in Indian polity."

On the eve of Cripps' visit Srinivasa Sastri appealed to the "leaders of the various parties and the princes and their ministers whom Sir Stafford Cripps may consult" as follows: "See me prostrate before you and with supplicatory hands. Give up extreme demands which the British Government cannot grant. Compromise is not only necessary but honourable. You yield not to a rival but to the sovereign needs of the motherland. Pray do not seek delay. No need any more to consult followers. Everything has been canvassed and repeatedly. Take responsibility and give your word definitely. Your followers will loyally and gladly support you. They are only waiting anxiously for this supreme call. Trust them, they trust you. If Sir Stafford's proposals need modifications agreed upon by you they will certainly be made on his recommendation. Go ahead. Save the country, save her honour, save her future. Your countrymen will bless your names for ever and the world will venerate you as patriots who forgot their quarrels in the country's dire peril and unitedly won her prosperity as well as her freedom".

Replying to Sastri, C. Rajagopalachari said in a message "The question is not how much to ask or how much to take as a reasonable political compromise. It is how to make the Indian people forget their hostility to Britain and give up their apathy in regard to the military position. If Mr. Sastri will think on these lines he should see that what he should appeal for earnestly is not moderation on the part of Indian leaders or adjustment to the inclination of British Conservatives, but rather for courage and imagination on the part of the British to place an ideal before the Indian people worth fighting for and dying.

He should rack his experienced brain to find out how, on the one hand to make Britain realise that the old imperial mode and mentality will not do if the tragedy that is impending is to be avoided and on the other hand to make the Indian people and all their leaders realise that they cannot shirk or postpone responsibility for self-defence or prefer working at other problems in preference to this Inter-communal suspicions and rivalries will wait for peace Aggression will not wait but take advantage of them".

Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in Delhi on March 23 and held his first Press conference. The Hindu liked the way he went about his business but still warned him against being "chaperoned too much or smothered under elaborate official ceremonial. He has come to meet people and consult with leaders of non-official India. If the bureaucracy had its way it would tie him up into neat little knots with red tape and roll him in miles of red carpet neither of which commodity is on short ration yet in the third year of the war. But that he does not propose to be so treated is clear from his answer, to a question during his first Press conference soon after his arrival... An index to his attitude to such matters is perhaps to be found in the fact that Sir Stafford will be staying outside the Viceregal Lodge thereby ensuring easy accessibility and in the frequent Press conferences he has promised to hold during the progress of the negotiations. To the Press in India his procedure comes as a pleasant surprise. And we have no doubt that the newspapers on their side will show their appreciation of this gesture by responding to our distinguished guest's call to refrain from publishing untimely speculation and uninformed rumours calculated to prejudice the chances of a successful settlement of the outstanding issues".

Describing Cripps' Press conference Shiva Rao said "Deftly but with abundance of good humour he (Cripps) parried all questions which touched on the substance of the Cabinet's proposals, stopping one in the middle of his query with the remark, 'Now, you are almost asking me to disclose the proposals'. He went to the length of confessing, however, that personally he thoroughly and heartily agreed with the Cabinet's offer and that it was in accord with the spirit of his own past declarations regarding India. Mr. Churchill and he were in complete agreement on the proposals he would shortly place before Indian leaders but they had arrived at the same conclusions along different routes".

Cripps asked Shiva Rao after the Press conference whether he thought he would succeed. Shiva Rao told him that during those two years if the British really wanted a settlement, they could have had it. The passage of time had made things much more difficult; but even then he was not without hope provided the British Cabinet was determined to achieve success. Cripps smiled but said nothing, Shiva Rao reported.

The Cripps proposals which were published on March 29 envisaged immediate transfer of all portfolios in the Centre except defence into Indian hands and the establishment of a constitution-making body after the war to frame a Dominion Status constitution. The Hindu said: "The British Government's proposals for a constitutional and political settlement in India reveal on their part a realisation that the Indian people's demand for freedom cannot be resisted indefinitely. They seem to have nerved themselves to the prospect of parting with the reality of power at some not too remote time and have expressed their intention to take practical steps to implement this decision

immediately after the cessation of hostilities, which Sir S. Cripps has pointed out, would be much earlier than the termination of the war. But the scheme as expounded by Sir Stafford contains many vital gaps. And such light as he has been able to throw on some of these important matters is not likely to bring reassurance to those who might consider that whatever Britain's intentions may be about the transfer of power, the scheme she has outlined for its embodiment in a constitution may result in leaving in Britain's hand a very considerable quantum of power, if not actually the virtual control of India's future."

The Hindu pointed out that the British scheme "not only retains defence as a British preserve for the duration, it leaves interim arrangements in other respects too altogether nebulous"

Referring to the freedom given to provinces to keep out of the future Indian union The Hindu said "We cannot help feeling that the right to keep out that is to be conceded to individual provinces and the right to be given to the states to perpetuate the *status quo* will, taken together, result in allowing considerable power to remain in British hands and thus handicap the Indian Union if not weaken its power to maintain its integrity and to resist aggression".

The Hindu said "The British declaration begins by saying that its aim is to set up an Indian union. Its tenor and likely consequences are in favour of setting up a number of political entities — some multiple states, some unitary — which will not be integrated into a well-knit system making for the unity, strength and happiness of the Indian people who are one and indivisible. The British offer has thus shortcomings which must be remembered if it is not to fall short of Britain's own declared aims"

Reporting political reactions to the Cripps plan the Delhi Correspondent wrote the Congress leaders felt that unless the transfer of power meant complete control of defence apart from other subjects, there was little substance in the offer. He added, "It is significant that in these matters the Congress viewpoint has the backing of several other parties. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru emphatically agrees with the demand for effective control of defence as the real test of Sir S. Cripps' offer"

In another dispatch the Correspondent said "The Congress will endeavour to keep the door open for further negotiations by the British Government but it is clear that Sir S. Cripps' present proposals, as they stand, are unacceptable to it".

In a joint statement on April 2, Sapru and M. R. Jayakar urged the need to devise a satisfactory formula in respect of defence portfolio in which case the Cripps' mission might still succeed. They added that Indian opinion could not look upon any transfer of power as real unless the "Government of India is so constituted as to give an effective share to the country in the management of its defence and thus to increase immensely and without delay the military strength of the country to defeat the threatened aggression".

The Hindu said "Whatever may be the differences of opinion on other aspects of the scheme all sections of India without exception are agreed that it is indispensable that India should be given a full and effective voice in her defence here and now if the wholehearted co-operation of her people is to be harnessed to the war effort and if they are to be convinced that there is at last that real change of heart on Britain's part for which they have so far looked in

vain . Strangely enough when Indian statesmanship has shown that it can stand up to Britain's challenge to present a united demand, the British Government forgetting what they have been saying, maintain that agreement or no agreement defence cannot be transferred so long as the war lasts We would earnestly appeal to British statesmanship not to persist in the attitude of 'take it or leave it'. Let Sir Stafford Cripps have a free hand He cannot and must not fail"

Shiva Rao reporting from Delhi on April 3 said there was a "slight feeling of hope today that the deadlock in respect of the Cripps scheme may be overcome by some suitable formula which would satisfy on the one hand the Indian people that it implies no lack of trust in them or in their leaders but is inevitable in the present critical stage of the war and on the other hand would guarantee the position and authority of the Commander-in-Chief in the field of operations Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had a lengthy talk with Sir S Cripps today and since he saw Gandhiji yesterday speculation has been going on connecting the one event with the other. The feeling persists that on neither side is there willingness to acknowledge that a breakdown is imminent The hope is still entertained that the Congress criticism of the plan may lead to important modifications acceptable to the Congress Working Committee".

The U.S President's envoy in India, Col Luis Johnson took a hand in the backstage efforts to avert a breakdown of the Cripps plan He met Nehru and Azad and also Cripps. An agency message said on April 8 that as a result of his effort a formula had been evolved on the defence question which the Congress Working Committee was considering The report added. "A settlement under which a national Government may function in India is not improbable".

Based on another agency report from New Delhi, The Hindu believed that an agreement had been reached and wrote an editorial on April 10 welcoming the settlement but it proved to be premature The Delhi report had said: "It may now be definitely stated that so far as the Congress is concerned there will be no difficulty or delay in the establishment of a national Government in India A general understanding on the main points of discussion is nearly reached " The story had these headings "National Government in India. Cripps' invitation to party leaders. Congress accepts formula".

In his report to the British Cabinet on the failure of his mission Cripps threw light on the premature news of settlement with the Congress Cripps said the Congress Working Committee met on the morning of April 9 to consider the defence formula evolved through the intervention of Col Luis Johnson "An atmosphere of tense expectation prevailed in Delhi at this time", Cripps wrote, "and there is no doubt that there was general public anticipation of an agreement At lunch time on that day it was reported through Press channels that Mr Rajagopalachari had said on leaving the Congress meeting that agreement was now certain".

In its premature editorial The Hindu said "The long drawn out negotiations at Delhi have happily been carried to a successful conclusion if one may judge from reports which are unofficial it is true, but come from usually reliable sources. And the country will experience a feeling of profound thankfulness that statesmanship on both sides should have prevailed against what seemed fearful odds. Sir Stafford Cripps, who has shown endless patience, delicacy and tact, as well as a firm grasp of the essentials of the problem and

the sincerity and moral fervour without which a right approach to its solution could not have been made, has achieved the greatest success of his life and deserves well of both his country and ours. A special word of praise is also due to Col. Johnson, President Roosevelt's personal representative, who by his clear-headed realisation of the paramount need for a settlement in the interests of the Allied cause and the practical sympathy and ready resource which he brought to bear on the problem when it seemed likely to delay all attempts to solve it, has shown himself truly representative of the American mind at its best."

On April 11, however, Sir Stafford Cripps announced the failure of his mission. He said the British proposals had been withdrawn and they reverted to the position as it was before he came out to India. In a letter to Cripps, Maulana Azad, Congress President, made it clear that the talks broke down on the question of the formation of a truly national Government with the Viceroy remaining as a constitutional head. He said "While we cannot accept the proposals you have made we want to inform you that we are yet prepared to assume responsibility, provided a truly national Government is formed. We are prepared to put aside for the present all questions about the future though as we have indicated we hold definite views about it, but in the present the national Government must be a cabinet Government with full power and must not merely be a continuation of the Viceroy's Executive Council"

We get an idea of what happened behind stage and how the negotiations failed from Shiva Rao's letters. On April 9, he wrote to Sapru "A new formula seems to have been evolved in regard to defence with the help of Col. Johnson, Roosevelt's personal envoy. I have heard from reliable sources that he has exercised great pressure on both sides, on Wavell (Commander-in-Chief) as well as Jawaharlal, to come to a compromise. The formula, I am told, recognises a division of authority between the Indian defence member and the Commander-in-Chief, the latter to be war member with his responsibility in the field of operations, clear and unqualified. Last night there were definite suggestions of a national Government being formed with Jawaharlal as Defence Member"

On April 10, a day previous to the announcement of the failure of the talks, Shiva Rao wrote that things "look brighter on the whole. After a good deal of discussions and persuasion the Congress Working Committee has agreed to the demarcation of functions and authority of the Defence Member and of the Commander-in-Chief respectively. Mr. Rajagopalachari was of the view that at this stage it was not necessary to go into detailed lists of subjects for administration by these two members of council. It seems Cripps, no doubt under instructions, felt that it would be better to draw these lists so as to leave no room for misunderstanding at a later stage. Yesterday it seemed a settlement was within sight before the end of the day. Apparently there are still some minor points to be got over and the members of the C.W.C. do not seem to be in a hurry to complete this stage of the negotiations."

There was, however, a dramatic development the next day and Shiva Rao wrote on April 11: "On Thursday evening everything seemed to be going well and there were suggestions of a national Government. But late in the evening Jawaharlal and Azad had two and half hours with Cripps. The full details of the conversation are of course not available. But I gather that on the question of

defence while the Congress was agreeable to a demarcation of functions between the Defence Member and the C-in-C, the actual lists proposed were not quite satisfactory. There are two versions regarding this matter. One is that the differences were not serious, the other is that Jawaharlal was not satisfied with the proposals. In any event the actual breakdown seems to have come from a certain assurance which the Congress wanted from the Viceroy that apart from questions of defence he would in regard to the rest of the field of administration conduct himself like a constitutional Governor-General who shall be bound by a majority decision of the Executive Council unless the adoption of such a course would affect the peace and tranquillity of India."

Top officials of the Government of India had predicted to Shiva Rao failure of the Cripps Mission even before negotiations began. One top official told him: "I am certain that Cripps will go back a discredited man. Churchill is sending him out not because he has hopes of settlement but because Labour is giving trouble. Therefore he is being sent out so that after spending a futile month in India he may go back and report to his party that India is hopelessly divided and nothing can be done".

In another letter on March 16, 1942, Shiva Rao wrote: "In official circles the hope is that Cripps will fail and go back with the conviction that nothing is possible. It is incredible even now with the fate of the Empire in the balance, they should think only of their narrow selfish interests".

Shiva Rao has narrated an interesting anecdote connected with the Cripps Mission in an article in *The Hindu*. During the hitch in the negotiations over defence, Shiva Rao was called in by Col. Johnson and asked what had gone wrong. Shiva Rao told him of the deadlock on defence. Col. Johnson said President Roosevelt wanted to be assured on two points. (1) If there was a settlement, would India fight wholeheartedly on the Allied side right to the end and not think of a separate peace? and (2) Would India, when she obtained her freedom, be fair to her minorities, especially to the Muslims and the untouchables? If the President was satisfied on these two points, Col. Johnson said, there would be a settlement "because he is anxious to have one". Shiva Rao said Nehru would have no hesitation in agreeing to both conditions and Col. Johnson expressed a desire to see Nehru immediately. Shiva Rao persuaded Nehru after a great deal of effort to go in his car and meet Col. Johnson at his (Shiva Rao's) place. Somehow the news leaked out and a Delhi paper brought out a special supplement flashing the news and the whole thing ended in disaster.

Col. Johnson made one more effort after the Cripps Mission had ended. He sent a letter to Nehru through Shiva Rao in which he offered to fly Nehru to Washington in an American plane so that he could have a personal discussion with President Roosevelt. When Shiva Rao took this letter to Nehru in Allahabad he found Nehru would not agree to the suggestion.

Churchill was furious at Col. Johnson's intervention in New Delhi and he wrote to Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's personal envoy in London on May 31, 1942: "There are rumours that the President will invite Pandit Nehru to the United States. I hope there is no truth in this and that anyway the President will consult me beforehand. We do not at all relish the prospect of Johnson's return to India. The Viceroy is also much perturbed at the prospect. We are



fighting to defend this vast mass of helpless Indians from imminent invasion I know you will remember my many difficulties”.

The Hindu criticised the withdrawal of the Cripps offer as “hasty and unseemly” “If this gesture”, it wrote, “was not dictated by petulance unbecoming in a great nation it could only have proceeded from a strange conception of duty to India. It was perhaps Britain’s last chance to win over India. And by adopting the attitude of “Take it or leave it”, she has thrown away that chance leaving a great country smarting under an intolerable sense of humiliation. We have no hesitation in saying that Sir Stafford Cripps has done all that one man could do to avert this catastrophe. He has not succeeded so far in carrying his colleagues with him but we hope that in the interests of his own country, he will still persevere. Britain must sacrifice the pride of possession if she would save her own soul and save the world for democracy”

In a tribute to Col. Johnson, The Hindu said “From what we know of the negotiations in Delhi, Col. Johnson played an honourable and helpful role. His sincerity of purpose has been borne out by his subsequent utterances. His remarks at his first Press conference at Delhi were couched in language which we in India are able to understand and appreciate. They are so singularly free from that irritatingly patronising air which British statesmen affect. At the conclusion of the Press conference Col. Johnson let fall the cryptic remarks that there might be a “Johnson Version”, of the story of the Delhi negotiations, but that the time for giving that version was not yet. We are confident that his ‘version’ will bear out the nationalist charge that at the last minute Whitehall shied at transferring real power. We are also certain that he will see that the growing influence of America in Allied councils is utilised to press the British Government to concede the national demand for it is to the interest of neither the United Nations nor the U.S. that the present deadlock should continue”.

As politicians and newspapers were still discussing the failure of the Cripps Mission, the danger to Madras from the Japanese grew. The Japanese had already made their presence in the Bay of Bengal felt by bombing Vizagapatam and Cocanada and air attacks on Ceylon. On April 12, 1942, the Madras Government ordered non-essential population to leave Madras within the next few days as the Government had reason to believe that the “danger threatening Madras is now more serious. Persons who have no friends or relatives to whom they can go will be accommodated at Government camps in the suburbs of Madras”

The Hindu said the enemy’s objective was to subdue Ceylon and “it is possible that the enemy might attempt to occupy strips on our coast so as to use them as air bases against Ceylon and also perhaps with a view to preventing reinforcements being rushed from here to the Island”. Referring to the Government’s instructions to the people, The Hindu said “It is unnecessary to load our people with instructions. They seem to do the right thing by instinct. There has been little direction from above and political leadership is so uncertain. Yet the people are behaving with a disciplined and exemplary manner. There is little panic and no anti-social activities. Above all our people are demonstrating their traditional qualities of patience, fortitude and an even temper at a most critical time in our nation’s history”.

“To a superficial observer”, The Hindu wrote on April 18, “Madras city might appear to be ‘dead’. But the fact is that practically all the essential services are

functioning and the personnel have by all accounts stuck to their posts in commendable manner. Though the exodus of the last few days have reduced the population of the city to a small proportion of its normal strength, it cannot be said that the problem of food supply to those who have had to remain behind after sending away their families to safer places has been tackled satisfactorily".

"Madras seems to be slowly beginning to readjust itself to new conditions after its reactions to the grave news of last week", wrote *The Hindu* on April 22. "Owing to the migration of milkmen and milch cows the problem of milk and dairy supplies for the remaining population is acute. Used as almost the entire population is to coffee and tea, the absence of restaurants and the dearth of milk supply is a source of great inconvenience and hardship to city dwellers. The picture presented in residential areas of the city is one of sombre silence. Houses remain locked up most part of the day, the inmates having left. Whole streets remain virtually empty".

The Hindu strongly felt that the political situation should not be allowed to drift in view of the invasion threat and it called upon the Congress on April 23 "to establish an understanding with the Muslim League and other important minority organisations, on the basis that a joint demand should be made for the creation of a national Government for the duration without prejudice to the solution of long-range issues after the war by friendly negotiations and agreement".

What *The Hindu* had suggested was put forward in a more precise and thorough and outspoken manner by the Madras Legislature Congress Party under the inspiration of C. Rajagopalachari which was to create a split in the Congress organisation in Madras and temporary eclipse of Rajaji. The resolution passed by the Madras Legislature Congress Party on April 24 said "It is absolutely and urgently necessary in the best interests of the country at this hour of peril to do all that the Congress can possibly to remove every obstacle in the way of the establishment of a national administration to face the present situation and therefore in as much as the Muslim League has insisted on the recognition of the right of separation of certain areas from a united India upon the ascertainment of the wishes of the people of such areas as a condition precedent for a united national action at this moment of grave national danger, the party is of opinion and recommends to the A.I.C.C. that to sacrifice the chances of the formation of a national Government at this grave crisis for the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy over the unity of India is a most unwise policy and that it has become necessary to choose the lesser evil and acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation, should the same be persisted in when the time comes for framing a constitution for India and thereby remove all doubts and fears in this regard and to invite the Muslim League for a consultation for the purpose of arriving at an agreement and securing the installation of a national Government to meet the present national emergency".

The party also stressed the need for restoring popular Government in Madras and expressed the view that to facilitate united and effective action the Muslim League should be invited to participate in it.

The Madras Congress Party resolution, in effect, wanted the Congress to concede Pakistan if that was the price to be paid for a truly national Govern-

ment to be formed. It reflected C. Rajagopalachari's desperate mood which Shiva Rao noted during the Cripps negotiations. "I think", he wrote "Rajagopalachari alone among Congress leaders has seen the importance of a settlement and was therefore of the opinion from the beginning that the Congress should not even discuss the Cabinet's declaration but just go straight into office. Unfortunately he was in a minority of one."

Developments quickly followed. The Congress President, Maulana Azad said, "It greatly astonished and pained me that a man like Mr. C. Rajagopalachari in spite of his being a member of the Congress Working Committee should have adopted such an attitude. I am in communication with him".

The Wardha Correspondent reported that many Congress leaders "seem to have been taken by complete surprise at the suddenness with which the Madras resolution was sprung on the country. The Delhi talks concluded less than a fortnight ago and the last has not yet been heard on the subject. The urgent circumstances which necessitated the passing of the resolution between the last meeting of the Working Committee in Delhi and the next meeting in Allahabad are being examined by the leaders. The full implications of the resolution, it is understood, are being closely analysed and at this stage it seems there will be a storm of opposition from many quarters if the resolution comes up before the A.I.C.C. in its present form". The Correspondent added that C.R. had a two hour talk with Gandhiji.

The Hindu commented on the Madras Party resolution on April 28. It called attention to the conditions for recognition of separation mentioned in the resolution that the area which claimed separation should show that the claim "is based upon ascertainment of the wishes of its people. If the people of the Punjab or Bengal are against separation, for instance, then the Congress is not called upon to acknowledge the claim to separation. The other condition is that until the time for framing the constitution comes the League may not only not raise the issue of separation but should work in active co-operation with the Congress and other parties as part of a truly national Government. This means that when the time comes for formulating its constitutional demand, the League should be guided, not by its present slogans or vague fears of domination by others but by the actual experience of how under a united National Government the legitimate rights and claims of Muslims have fared. If the experience of Muslim leaders was that in regard to their genuine needs, requirements and interests they had little to complain, then they should as public spirited and patriotic leaders desist from persisting in the demand for separation. It is right that the sponsors of the Madras resolution have proceeded on the basis that Muslim leaders are ardent patriots and that what is wanted is only demonstration by the leaders of other communities, in some striking manner, that in actual practice the Muslims need have no fear of their future and that the goal of the Congress is likely to ensure the equal rights of every Indian whatever his creed or community".

The Hindu went on: "A solemn responsibility is cast upon the Congress leaders to find the best way to approach the Muslim League and to take steps to allay the League's apprehension that if it co-operated in the formation of a national Government it would be prejudicing the case for Pakistan. The leaders of the Muslim League should, on their part, shed their unreasoning fears and unjust suspicions and be prepared to discuss proposals with a

will to arrive at a settlement. Once the League begins functioning as part of a united Indian Government in a joint endeavour during this period of crisis we feel that when the time comes to frame the permanent constitution the need for separation would no longer be found to exist"

The A.I.C.C. at Allahabad on May 3, rejected C. Rajagopalachari's resolution (the same as that passed by the Madras party) by 120 votes to 15. Raja-gopalachari had resigned from the Working Committee to move the resolution. In his speech C.R. said: "Let us give the Muslims what they have been asking. It is mere shadow. They themselves will say they do not want it, if you do not keep it in your pocket but throw it on the table"

A voice: Do all Muslims want it or is it only the Muslim League?

C.R. replied the distinction had often been drawn and was well known. The reply to it was also well known. The difficulty had been to dislodge the Muslim League from its position of control and influence with large masses of Muslims.

Jawaharlal Nehru: No

C.R. challenged Nehru to produce results. Let him produce a settlement of the communal problem and then he (C.R.) would go down on his knees before him. The Muslim League must be faced boldly. C.R. told the members a parable. "Suppose you wanted to catch the train and when you start from your house your child wants to sit in the front seat (of the car). It is no use arguing with him and telling him that the seat had been promised to a friend. You will be quite all right in your reasoning but you will miss the train. If you are wise you will let the child sit in the front seat and go and catch the train." C.R. said "The ghost of Pakistan is not going to kill you. I want to hold it by the beard and face it"

The Hindu which recognised that C.R. had made a "courageous effort to break through the vicious circle and face the facts of the situation squarely", said the defeat of his resolution had left the Congress without a "positive policy (and its followers without a positive guidance) on the all important question of resolving the political deadlock which has deprived the people of the means for even such amelioration of their hardship in these difficult times as the existence of popular Governments might have brought about. In so far as the constitutional claims of the Muslim League militate against the formation of such Governments in the provinces and at the centre, it is the duty of the Congress to try to come to an understanding with the League, even if it be only for the duration and without prejudicing its right to insist, when the time comes, on the fundamental principles on which the future and permanent Government of India should be based". The Allahabad Correspondent writing on the A.I.C.C. debate said that though C.R. had only 15 supporters for his resolution as against 120, he had the satisfaction of making his audience think seriously on the issue of Hindu-Muslim settlement and with surprisingly little ill-feeling. There was general applause at the end of his half an hour's sustained intellectual effort, showing that the audience though in sharp disagreement with him appreciated his courage and his sincerity, the Correspondent said.

In the next few weeks C.R. addressed meetings and talked to Pressmen urging the need for Congress-League accord and The Hindu carried extensive reports and also reports of support for him from prominent public leaders.

Nehru, however, was angry with him. In a speech in Lahore on May 21, he said the step taken by C R was "detrimental to the interests of our country. It appears to me that he is breaking to pieces the weapon which the Congress has fashioned after 22 years of innumerable sacrifices. I do not want to say that Rajaji wants to divide the Congress but the fact is that he no longer commands the support of the Congress"

Nehru said he was against the vivisection of India and was rather thinking of bringing about a federation of India, China, Iran and Afghanistan. He had come to the conclusion India should never be divided and he would fight the separation issue with all the power he could command. But he made it clear if the majority of the people in a particular territorial unit wanted separation it could not be withheld from them. But there was a vast difference between him and Rajaji in as much as he would make every effort to prevent the division of India.

Gandhiji wrote in *Harijan*, "I hold Rajaji to be in the wrong. He is creating a false atmosphere. He does not believe in Pakistan nor do the nationalist Muslims and others who concede the right of separation or secession. They and Rajaji say that is the way to wean the Muslim League from the demand for separation. I am surprised that many Muslims rejoice over a concession of doubtful value. I see nothing but seeds of further quarrel in it. It should be enough to state the proposition that nothing can prevent the Muslim League from having it if the Muslims really want it. They will take it by the vote or the sword unless they will submit to arbitration. . . . Rajaji's method leads us to the blind alley unless his admirable and patriotic persistence opens a way unknown to him or any of us".

Earlier Gandhiji had written "There is no doubt that Rajaji is handling a cause which has isolated him from his colleagues. But his worst enemy will not accuse him of any selfish motive behind the extraordinary energy with which he has thrown himself into the controversy of which he is the author"

Again writing in *Harijan* Gandhiji called Rajaji's plan "unnatural" "He wants to thrust himself on the British power which does not want him for as the possessor by the right of conquest it gets all it wants. In order to thrust himself on the British he gives the League the right of self-determination which every single individual has whether the others recognise it or not. Rajaji does not like partition and hugs the belief that his superfluous recognition of the inherent right will enable him to avoid partition".

Defending his proposal at a meeting in Salem in June, Rajaji said it related to areas where the Muslims were the preponderant element in the population and where the Government based on the votes of the people of the area was already in their hands. In these areas if the representatives of the people wanted that the powers and functions now vested in the Central Government should vest in themselves what prevented their having it? It might be unreasonable and we might advise them against it but how could we deny their right to ask for it? His proposal, Rajaji said, amounted merely to a recognition of this right and not to an immediate grant of a separate sovereign state. "We do not divest ourselves of our right to persuade them against separation, but we do not deny them the right to separate if in spite of our persuasion they wished to go apart" Rajaji said it was not as if we were dividing or giving away something which we possessed; our independence had yet to be achieved in co-operation with

other sections of the people. We did not therefore divide anything now, we merely recognised the right of other sections of the people also to a share in order that they might feel as we did and exert themselves as we would in the fight for defence of the country and for the establishment of our Independence.

Shiva Rao wrote from Delhi "C R's campaign has been followed here with keen interest. If the Congress comes to a settlement with the Muslim League and expresses willingness to form coalition Government both at the Centre and in the provinces which would fight the Japanese wholeheartedly that would without doubt create an entirely new situation"

Things however took a different turn. On July 8, Kamaraj Nadar, President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, issued a show cause notice to C. Rajagopalachari asking him to explain within 15 days his propaganda against the party stand and advocacy of partition. The Hindu featured both the show cause notice and C.R.'s campaign in the city on his proposal side by side on the leader page. On July 9, Rajagopalachari announced his resignation from the Congress "in order to be absolutely free to carry on my campaign for converting the Congress from its present policy". He did this in a letter to the P. C. C. President and also said he would resign his membership of the Assembly.

Declaring that it would be difficult to sustain the charge that Rajagopalachari as four anna Congress member "has been guilty of breach of discipline", The Hindu wrote: "We have not been told that Rajagopalachari disobeyed any directions or orders. Is the propaganda which he has been conducting such that it deserves expulsion? What is the objective of that propaganda? It is to persuade the Congress to pass a resolution adopting the Madras Legislature Party resolution concerning the Muslim League's demand. Mr Rajagopalachari certainly cannot gain his demand by discrediting the Congress or seeking 'to lower the power and prestige of the Congress'. A Congress even more powerful than it is at present will subserve his purpose better. It is opposed to commonsense to suggest that he would 'deliberately act' in a way calculated 'to lower the power and prestige of the Congress'. The Congress which stands for undiluted democratic ideals should not in the name of discipline suppress legitimate differences of opinion or criticisms which may have to be given expression to in the highest interests of the organisation. To seek to put a curb on free expression of opinion is a suicidal course to adopt in the case of the humblest of members; and when the ban is sought to be placed undeservedly on a leader of Mr. Rajagopalachari's antecedents and standing, the thinking public are bound to ask whither we are drifting? An organisation like the Congress derives its strength from and owes its supremacy to the leadership of men like Mr Rajagopalachari whose integrity, character and record of public service entitle them to espouse the country's cause. It certainly will be the poorer if the Congress executive continues to act in a manner calculated to deprive it of the services of such devoted public servants"

The Congress Working Committee, meeting at Wardha on July 14, 1942, asked Britain to "quit India". In a 1700 word resolution the Committee called for the withdrawal of the British power from India, failing which the Congress would consider mass action under Gandhiji's leadership.

In a dispatch on the resolution the Wardha Correspondent wrote: "Congress leaders interpret the resolution as a friendly hint and as giving one more chance — perhaps the last one to the British Government to make a bold and statesmanlike step to satisfy the national demand, which action alone would, they stress, prove to be the deciding factor if the war is to be brought to a successful conclusion. The restraint which the Committee has deliberately imposed on the language used in the resolution and the general desire running throughout the resolution for an amicable and early settlement of the political future of the country are pointed out as evidence of the anxiety of the Committee to avoid any precipitate action and to delay the next step as long as possible consistent with the urgency of the war situation. There is plenty of time between now and August when the A.I.C.C. will meet to take a final decision and if the British Government is really anxious to do justice, though belated, by India they could certainly take the initiative and reopen negotiations."

The Hindu's comment on the resolution was "Whatever one may think of the expediency at this juncture of resorting to the extreme measure contemplated by Gandhiji and his colleagues none can deny the right of a subject nation to take every measure it thinks feasible and prudent for achieving freedom. Nor should it be forgotten that the Congress has been driven to these straits by the contumacious attitude of Britain. It is not yet too late for her to retrace her steps and take the hand of friendship and accept the hearty co-operation which the Congress has offered. Whatever she may decide to do it will be foolish for her to rely on the continuance of communal differences to sustain her power".

Interpreting the Working Committee's resolution, Gandhiji said: "It simply means the unconditional withdrawal of the British power without reference to the wishes of the parties or the people as a whole. If the British see the wisdom of recognising the independence of India without reference to parties then, of course, negotiations are possible." Asked if this was the last chance that was being given to the British Government, Gandhiji replied. "This is open rebellion of a non-violent character. There is no question of last chance".

In another comment on the "Quit India" resolution, The Hindu said "It is no use seeking to disguise the fact that every patriotic Indian has come to feel that he is in an occupied country much in the same manner as certain peoples of Europe in the wake of the present war, have come to feel. What measures the people should take to free themselves and whether the one which the Congress contemplates, involving as it does, grave perils may be launched at this juncture are matters exclusively for Indians to consider. The Congress owes a duty to itself and to the great cause which it exists to espouse. An essential requirement is that the step it proposes to take — one so momentous and beset with such risks as mass action — should have the assured support of the whole country. In this regard the Congress, it seems to us, has yet to fortify itself. It is regrettable that in spite of the utmost urgency of the matter there are as yet no signs of any understanding being attempted with the Muslim community which is the largest minority in the country. The absence of an agreement with the Muslims is bound to constitute a serious handicap in achieving freedom by peaceful negotiations with Britain or despite of her"

The Hindu, supporting the plea of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, urged Gandhiji on behalf of the Congress to call a conference of political leaders at which the terms of India's demand to Britain could be discussed and settled "The Congress", The Hindu said, "by initiating such a move will be giving but one more proof that it is not embarking light-heartedly on a struggle which may involve the people of this country in untold hardship and suffering, jeopardise the fate of friendly China and seriously damage the prospects of the Allies. Gandhiji has said repeatedly that he is straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority and he means it. We would urge therefore it will be worthwhile to explore the conference idea even at this late hour, since sentiment in the country seems widely to favour it and the prospects of success attending on such an effort are not meagre".

The Hindu editorial was based on a report from its Indore Correspondent who said: "Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru is believed to be corresponding with Gandhiji regarding the desirability of calling a small round table conference, preferably on Gandhiji's initiative. Sir Tej holds the view that such a conference has the best chance of success provided it is called by leaders of the Congress, the Muslim League and other major parties. According to Sir Tej the conference should deal with two main problems: The best method of organising all our forces against the Japanese and a Hindu-Muslim settlement. He does not accept the suggestion that a communal settlement is incapable of achievement so long as the British are responsible for many things. He regards the suggestion that the British must first quit India as a confession of our failure. The conference plan in his opinion is the only practical method and the chances of its succeeding would be enhanced if Gandhiji would take the initiative".

On the eve of the A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay on August 7, The Hindu wrote "There are a number of important things which it is worthwhile for the A.I.C.C. to do before it decides that a struggle such as Gandhiji envisages is inevitable and cannot be delayed any longer. He rightly observes, 'the justice of the demand for the ending of British power has never been questioned, the moment chosen for enforcing it is the target of attack'. He considers there is no other way except insisting on British authority vacating now, that may save India from the threatened Japanese attack. But the fact that there is no unanimity of opinion on this crucial question is a reality that cannot be brushed aside. The least the Congress can do is to make one other attempt to convince other sections of opinion in the country that the Congress policy is the right one in the circumstances and to induce them to join with it in pressing the Congress demand so that Britain would find it more difficult to reject it out of hand. This should incidentally give the United Nations sufficient time to recover from the shock that the Wardha resolution has apparently given them and to consider it in a cool and dispassionate spirit. We have no doubt that once they do this they will come to see the justice of the Congress demand and realising how greatly their own future is at stake insist upon Britain facing the issue squarely instead of evading it or trying to glose it over with irrelevant issues".

The Hindu said "Let Gandhiji meet the principal party leaders separately or together and put the Congress viewpoint on these matters before them and seek their countenance and support for the Congress demand so that he may



present it to Britain as the demand of a united India. The hands of the Congress will be enormously strengthened and world opinion will have no excuse for allowing Britain to shift her ground for refusing India her just rights. The A.I.C.C. owes it to itself and the country to press Gandhiji to explore the chances of a peaceful settlement before he finally decides upon launching the struggle."

On August 6, 1942, *The Hindu* declined to publish a Government communication giving currency to documents seized from the A.I.C.C. office in Allahabad including the draft resolution of Gandhiji for the Working Committee and brief notes prepared by the Assistant Secretary on the discussions in the Working Committee on Gandhiji's draft. *The Hindu* said: "It is nothing short of a scandal that the Government seizing an opportunity provided by the right to search premises, conferred on authority for very different purposes, should have seen fit to parade these private documents before the public, evidently in the hope that they might serve to discredit a great political organisation. But it is bound to be a damp squib. It is no conspiracy that the Government have unearthed here. There is nothing in these documents of which the Congress need be ashamed, no statement or sentiment which Congressmen have not publicly expressed at some time or other. It would be wrong to give this absurd stunt the wider publicity the Government seek and we must therefore decline to publish it in *The Hindu*."

Referring to the documents seized by the Government, Jawaharlal Nehru in a statement said they related to Gandhiji's alleged statement that the Axis would win the war and that a free India would negotiate with Japan. He made it clear that what Gandhiji meant was that unless Britain changed her whole policy in regard to India and her colonial possessions she was heading for disaster. He had further said that if a suitable change in policy was made and the war became one for freedom for all peoples then victory would assuredly come to the United Nations. As regards Japan, Nehru said the references were incorrect and torn from their context. "Gandhiji always sends notice to his adversary before coming into conflict. He would thus have called upon Japan not only to keep away from India but to withdraw from China etc. In any event he was determined to resist every aggressor in India and he advised the people to do so even to the point of death."

Gandhiji, when asked about the seized documents and his alleged remarks, said, "After the full and frank explanation of Nehru I hardly think I need answer your questions. I wholly agree with the opinions expressed by him".

On August 5, the Congress Working Committee meeting before the A.I.C.C. session in Bombay restated the national demand in the light of developments since the passing of the Wardha resolution. The resolution said in clear terms that on the declaration of Independence a Provisional Government would be formed and free India would become an ally of the United Nations. The resolution said that the Provisional Government would be a composite one, representing all important sections of India, charged with the definite duty of defending India against aggression. The resolution provided for the retention of foreign soldiers in India, armed defence by the people as well as resistance by non-violent methods. It indicated that India's future constitution should be a federal one with a large measure of autonomy for the federating units and with residuary powers vested in the units.

The Hindu said the resolution showed that the Congress was anxious on the one hand "to avoid a tragic conflict if at all that is honourably possible and on the other to remove all genuine misapprehensions about its intentions whether in regard to the immediate present or to the future after the war" The Hindu noted: "It should be obvious from the character and constitution envisaged for the proposed provisional Government that the constitutional machinery that is to be set up for evolving an agreed constitution can itself be only the outcome of general agreement That Constituent Assembly will consider all alternative schemes that are placed before it. The Working Committee has indicated the kind of scheme that the Congress might itself favour when the time for constitutional discussion comes But it should be clear that while thus indicating its individual preference the Congress by stressing that the future constitution should be 'acceptable to all sections of the people' shows that it realises that other parties would be equally at liberty to place their own scheme before the constitution-making body and to have them carefully considered. The Muslim League, for instance, would be free to press for Pakistan even as the Congress might plead support for the Federal plan The important thing is that the constitution will not be imposed by any party in India or outside on the rest This undertaking given by the Working Committee on behalf of the largest body of organised opinion in the country should set at rest all genuine apprehensions on the score"

The Hindu concluded "We would urge that the Congress having made its attitude toward the minority and communal problems perfectly clear should approach the recognised leaders of the major non-Congress parties for their co-operation in presenting a joint demand on the basis of the Congress position outlined in the resolution If a conference would serve the purpose we do not see why the Congress should not make an attempt to summon one Gandhiji has told Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru that if the latter summons such a conference he for one would have no objection to attend it We would respectfully press that he may go further without in any way compromising his position or the dignity of the Congress Having decided on direct action to enforce its demand if all appeals to Britain should fail, the Congress has a clear duty to exhaust, first of all, methods of approach that might obviate resort to such drastic remedies. If Britain's professions are any guide, she should yield to a united demand The Congress should strain every nerve to put them to the proof by inducing all other parties in the country to join with it in making a demand which each one of them has in its own way and speaking for itself, put forward in the past".

M A Jinnah in a statement on Gandhiji's offer to have power transferred to the Muslim League said. "If the British Government accepts the solemn recommendation of Mr Gandhi and by an arrangement hands over the Government of the country to the Muslim League, I am sure that under the Muslim rule, the non-Muslims will be treated fairly, justly, nay generously and further the British will be making full amends to Muslims by restoring the Government of India to the Muslims from whom they had taken it. I am sure the Muslims will welcome such a decision on the part of the British Government".

Introducing the Working Committee's resolution in the A I C.C. on August 8, Jawaharlal Nehru referred to suggestions that the Congress should try for a settlement with the Muslim League He said: "We were prepared to stake

everything consistent with our dignity and self-respect towards finding a satisfactory settlement. Whenever we knocked we found the doors were bolted and we knocked ourselves against a wall. Are we beggars to be treated like this? Are we going to be so dishonourable as to sacrifice our mansion of Indian freedom which we want to build? Are we going to be kicked about by men who have made no sacrifice for the freedom of India and who can never think in terms of freedom at all? Our conscience is clear. We have made every effort that is humanly possible for arriving at a settlement. The Muslim masses are not reactionary. We have made strenuous and sincere attempts to resolve the issue and all our attempts have either been sabotaged or frustrated."

Also at the A.I.C.C. Gandhiji referred to the Muslim League and Jinnah "Mr. Jinnah has been a Congressman in the past," he said. "He seems now to be misguided. I pray for long life to him and wish that he may survive me. A day will certainly dawn when he will realise that I have never wronged him or the Muslims. The Pakistan scheme is in Mr. Jinnah's pocket only. He is misrepresenting facts. He cannot suppress truth. I do not want to enter into any discussion on the merits or demerits of the Pakistan issue. Mr. Jinnah claims to be the leader of Muslims. If this satisfied Mr. Jinnah then I have nothing to add. But I am afraid he has a lot of vanity and that would destroy him. Several Muslim friends have come to me and told me Pakistan is very injurious to the country. I myself consider that Pakistan is not a healthy idea. But if the entire Muslims are in favour of Pakistan, of course, nobody can prevent them from having it. Hindus cannot coerce Muslims. I would pray to my Muslim brothers to judge for themselves dispassionately which is right and which is wrong. Let the issue be decided by a tribunal and let us abide by the verdict of the tribunal. If the Muslim League is not prepared to accept this offer then, how can it expect to force the scheme upon others by mere coercion? Mr. Jinnah does not seem to believe in the Congress programme and in the Congress demand. But I cannot wait any longer for India's freedom. I cannot wait till Mr. Jinnah is converted for the immediate consummation of Indian freedom. I am very impatient. Communal unity is undoubtedly essential for the country's freedom but you must know it is freedom for all and not for any particular community".

After the resolution was passed by the A.I.C.C., Gandhiji spoke to it. He said, "I want to declare to the world — whatever may be said today to the contrary and although I may have forfeited the regard of many a friend of the West, even the trust of some of them — that even for their love and for their friendship I must not suppress the voice within me, call it conscience, call it by anything you like, call it the promptings of my basic nature. I do not mind how you describe it, but there is something there. I have learnt psychology and I know exactly what it is, although I may not be able to describe it to you. That voice tells me that I shall have to fight against the whole world and stand alone. It also tells me: 'you are safe so long as you stare the world in the face, although the world may have bloodshot eyes. Do not fear that world, but go ahead with the fear of God in you'. That thing is within me. You have to forsake wife, friends, forsake everything in the world. I want to live the whole span of my life. But I do not think I will live so long. When I am gone India will be free and not only will India be free but the whole world will be free."

Gandhiji gave this stirring message to the people: "Our struggle is now to start. Let every Indian consider himself a free man. He must be ready for the

actual attainment of freedom or perish in the attempt. His attitude towards life should be that he is a free man. Mere jail going would not do. There is no more bargaining. There is no room for office acceptance. There is no compromise on the demand for freedom. Freedom first and then only the rest. Do not be cowards because cowards have no right to live. Freedom should be your mantra and you should chant it."

Gandhiji and members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested early on the morning of August 9 and taken to an unknown destination. When the police came to arrest Nehru, he shouted, "Hurray, they have come", and said he would be ready in a few moments. The Congress was declared an unlawful body and police arrested Congressmen all over the country. Disturbances broke out in Bombay and later all over India and Government's repressive machinery went into action. There were innumerable police firings on unarmed crowds and the army was employed in many places to beat the people to submission.

The Hindu called the arrest of Gandhiji and other Congress leaders a "colossal blunder". "It is not the first time that the Government have thus misjudged the situation but so extraordinary are the circumstances in which they have elected to precipitate a crisis that the verdict of history will be that they acted even more irresponsibly than they had done on previous occasions." The Hindu said the resolution adopted by the A.I.C.C. was expressly designed to leave no room for either genuine misapprehensions or such wanton misrepresentation as Mr. Amery has been repeatedly guilty of. Having got the A.I.C.C. to adopt that resolution Gandhiji made it clear that he was resolved to explore every avenue to a peaceful settlement, including personal discussion with the Viceroy and stated that a mass movement would be started only as a last resort. But the Government were obviously unwilling to give him a chance to do this. Without making the slightest attempt to understand the new resolution or consider it seriously with a view to finding out whether it offered better prospects of a settlement than the Wardha resolution seemed to do, the Government have resolved to force a fight on the Congress, just as the Willingdon Government did after the second R.T.C."

The Hindu said: "Jailing Congress leaders is easy but it has not paid in the past and will not pay any more now. The problem they present must be faced by Britain boldly, sympathetically and in a spirit of true statesmanship. Otherwise the prospects for both countries are indeed bleak".

The country-wide disturbances which raged for several weeks led to the imposition of Press censorship which included restrictions on reports of Congress activities and the disturbances and compulsory licensing of press correspondents. Criticising the Government's action, The Hindu said: "In issuing their general order under Defence Rules as to the restrictions to be imposed on the publication of news relating to any mass movement the Congress might launch the Government of India have not only ignored the limits of Governmental interference with the freedom of the Press which are so well recognised as to be a common place in all democratic countries. They have deliberately discarded the restraints which on former occasions they have imposed upon themselves in this matter vitally affecting popular liberties. And their press note which tries to explain and justify this departure alike from their own practice in the past and from all precedents merely goes to confirm

the view that no Government, least of all one constituted as the present Government of India is, is fitted to be entrusted with such comprehensive and arbitrary powers”.

The Hindu said: “The moment any Government interferes with the normal business of those whose duty it is to sift the news and supply it to the public, it destroys at once their utility and the one effective safeguard against rumour-mongering and baseless panic. That is the common sense underlying the insistence in all democracies that the press should be free; only a free press can be a responsible press; and only a responsible press will be taken seriously by the public”.

The Hindu at the same time warned the people against indulging in violence and said: “We would make an earnest appeal to the common people everywhere to take a tight hold of themselves, to see how degrading and pointless these outbursts are and to turn their faces resolutely against all those who would excite them to such excesses. The fact that many natural leaders of the people, who would have thrown their weight against such violence, and disorder are behind prison bars, makes it all the more necessary that every man who loves his country and his people should do all in his power to see that these insane disturbances are ended and normal life is restored”.

The Hindu at the same time called upon non-Congress parties “to try on the one hand to exert all their powers of persuasion and leadership to restore calm and quiet in the country; on the other they should put on the Government all the pressure they can muster with a view to seeing that a truly national Government — on which everyone of these parties has declared itself as keen as the Congress — is set up without delay”.

As the disturbances continued and the Government employed inhuman methods to suppress them, they came more heavily on the Indian Press which reported the events. One of their victims was the *Hindustan Times* of Delhi which was asked by the Chief Commissioner of Delhi not to publish more than three columns of news about the disturbances and on failure to comply with the order, the Editor, Devadas Gandhi, was arrested. “This is an order”, The Hindu said, “that simply takes our breath away. It demonstrates the fact that the Chief Commissioner is as innocent as a newborn babe of the very elements of newspaper production. By insisting that no paper shall publish more than three columns of the news of the present disturbances, the Chief Commissioner makes it impossible for them to fulfil their duty to the public which is to give it all the news which in their judgment is fit to print. In view of the range and magnitude of the trouble that has started, it is obviously impossible to confine even purely factual reports to three columns — why the various official communiques issued every day would by themselves take up more than that space — or indeed to regulate publication of news by any such yardstick at all. The authorities by issuing such orders are only demonstrating that it is dangerous to entrust them with vast powers of interference with the operation of the Press of which they have not even an elementary understanding. It is the limit surely when a gentleman who has probably been never inside a newspaper office is permitted in the name of the Government to draw up rules as to how news should be displayed; that is just what the U.P. Government following in the footsteps of the Bengal Government have done. They have, according to the *National Herald*, issued a Gazette Extraordinary ‘prohibiting the

printing or publishing of any matter in any newspaper in a type larger than that of some specimen given in the Gazette Extraordinary or in a line of continuous type wider than half of the breadth of the printed page of such publication' The pity of it is that the authorities do not seem to understand that such bungling and amateurish attempts to teach newspapers their business are bound to defeat the fundamental object of the Government"

The whole subject was considered at the All-India Newspaper Editors' conference in Bombay on October 5. Presiding over the session, Kasturi Srinivasan said "We do not seek to minimise the fact that we have been unable to influence in our favour certain provincial Governments. I am not concerned to deny it. But as against this, I may say that war or no war we did assert our rights to give expression to our grievances in the political field and have brought the Government to realise the necessity to keep off from interfering with us in that respect. True, there were one or two occasions when the Home department did attempt to lecture to us on the subject of defeatism in war-time. But after one of those frank and free exchanges of views between the Home Member and ourselves the question was dropped"

Referring to pre-censorship and other restrictions on the Press, Srinivasan said: "Freedom of the Press is part of the larger freedom of the country and until the country is free the Press has necessarily to work under the limitations arising from factors and forces that are imposed on it. I have no doubt in my mind that the public do require the Press to continue to function, to serve them within the limits of even the diminished opportunities. There is unmistakable evidence that the people do not desire to be starved of news. They want papers to publish and discover ways and means for themselves to serve as best they can. The problem that we are confronted with today is to decide what attitude the Indian Press should take in the light of the demands of the Government. There is no question of our willing submission to any proposal which in our opinion is derogatory to the profession or in any way prevents us from functioning as responsible newspapers"

The conference endorsed Srinivasan's formula of withdrawal of all restrictions on an assurance of exercise of self-restraint by Editors and passed a resolution urging freedom to publish news without pre-censorship. At the same time it advised Editors to observe restraint in the presentation of news of disturbances and to avoid the publication of news that might encourage illegal or subversive activities. On the basis of this resolution the Government withdrew the rigorous restrictions they had imposed on newspapers and the papers which had earlier closed down resumed publication. But this was not the end of the story. There was to be another confrontation between the Press and the Government before long.

The first news about Gandhiji in detention was given by the Bombay Correspondent who wrote on August 23: "It is learnt that Gandhiji is keeping good health. He has been examined by a Government doctor who found him quite fit. It is stated that Mahatmaji is now allowed daily newspapers of his choice. He gets up as usual at 4 a.m. for prayer which now lasts for longer periods than before. The whole of the Gita is recited by him, Dr. Sushila Nayar, Mrs. Kasturbhai Gandhi and Mira Ben. At 6 a.m. Gandhiji takes goat's milk and goes out for a walk. He is also having long periods of massage and gets his usual diet of chappatis and fruit juice both for his midday and evening meals. He devotes

more time to spinning in the evening and to reading newspapers. He also occasionally reads the Koran"

In view of the continuing disturbances in the country, The Hindu appealed to the Government to release Gandhiji and "seek his powerful co-operation more easily and speedily to put an end to the disorders which threaten chaos than by relying upon the powers of repression, formidable as they may be" The Hindu added: "The important thing to grasp is that these manifestations of violence disastrous as they are derive much of their strength from the deep and bitter sense of national frustration that lies on the country like a pall. It is that bitterness that must be exorcised and we can see no other way of doing this than by conferring on India forthwith complete responsibility for her affairs and thus arming her with the power and the enthusiasm to throw all her resources into the fight against the Axis"

But The Hindu was wasting its breath. Shiva Rao wired from Delhi on September 5 "Delhi's attitude has definitely hardened during the past few days and the hopes of further reform which had been roused seem to have vanished. Officials of the Home Department go about with the air of a general staff engaged in a vital engagement, their view is that this is internal war. The strong methods sanctioned by them to deal with the disturbances certainly seem very much so. Destruction there has been during the past month on a vast scale — destruction which India could ill afford from the point of view of the real war with the Axis powers. But the punishment has been correspondingly heavy and parts of India like Bihar have "taken it" as the phrase goes. Manifestations of mob fury lie all round us but the cost of operations the Home Department has sanctioned to restore law and order — cost in terms of bitterness, misery and racial ill-will — one can only reckon when normal conditions have been restored and the country begins to realise what has happened in certain areas. Until the movement has been put down beyond all possibility of its raising its head again and Gandhiji unconditionally withdraws the threat of civil disobedience nothing it seems can be done. Some of the Indian members of the Executive Council who have believed at one time that having sanctioned the present policy (little realising its implications) they would be entitled to regard further Indianisation inevitable find themselves in an unenviable position"

On September 10 Winston Churchill, Prime Minister, made a statement on India in the Commons in the course of which he said the Congress had no support and the situation was improving. He added. "So far as matters have gone up to the present they have revealed the impotence of the Congress Party either to seduce or even sway the Indian army, to draw from their duty the enormous body of Indian officials or still less to stir the vast Indian masses. India is a continent almost as large and actually more populous than Europe and divided by racial and above all by religious differences far deeper than any that have separated the Europeans. The whole administration of the Government of 390 millions in India is carried on by Indians, there being under 600 British members of the I.C.S". Churchill added: "I may add that large reinforcements have reached India and that the number of white soldiers now in that country, although very small compared to its size and population, is larger than at any time in the British connection".

The Hindu remarked that Churchill had broken his own record by packing into a few hundred words "more mischievous half-truths than he treated the House of Commons to during the weary progress of the India Bill. He seems to have compensated himself with a vengeance for the silence he has had to endure ever since he took office. And it is clear that his experience as Premier during the gravest crisis that has yet confronted his country has not improved him in any way, that so far as India is concerned he is as dangerously irresponsible, as arrogantly contemptuous and as purblind as ever. Neither from the present Government of Britain nor from the senile Parliament that dutifully applauds Mr. Churchill's most outrageous sentiments will even the most optimistic in India entertain hereafter hope of justice or even understanding. . . . If after all these years the British Government rely on their white soldiers for the maintenance of what Mr. Churchill calls 'stability' and what others might more bluntly call, Britain's rule in India, what a grim commentary it is on that rule and on Mr. Churchill's claim that everybody in India except the contemptible little Congress is happy and contented and overflowing with zeal for co-operation. . . . Mr. Churchill in his truculence may even retort 'Who talks of a settlement?' Nevertheless, settlement there will have to be and the sooner Britain finds trustworthy and wise men to attempt it the better it will be for her".

Amery, Secretary of State for India, revealed the role played by Churchill as a stumbling block to all progressive steps in India in an outspoken letter to the Viceroy, Lord Wavell late in 1943. "The real trouble as we both know well", he wrote, "is that you and I both genuinely mean to implement the Government's pledges if they can be implemented and at any rate to make quite clear that we are sincerely doing our best to promote a solution even if we have to stand firmly by the conditions which are essential to enable India to start off at peace within herself and in conditions which are likely to have some reasonable stability. The Prime Minister passionately hopes that any solution involving the fulfilment of our pledges can still somehow or other be prevented and with that end in view naturally makes difficulties at every stage. In between come the Cabinet most of whom agree with us in their hearts and would do so even more if it became a question of stating a policy in public. But when in the Cabinet room a particular question crops up they are overborne by the P.M.'s vehemence and are glad to find an escape from open disagreement with him by accepting arguments against a particular matter brought up whether it be an Indian Finance Minister . . . or the terms of an answer to Gandhi. We have just to be patient and carry on as best we can".

Shiva Rao in a dispatch from Delhi on November 22 revealed that before the arrests and detention of Gandhiji and other Congress leaders a suggestion came from London that they be deported to East Africa. The Indian members of the Executive Council opposed the suggestion but agreed on a compromise that they might be denied all access to the outside world from their place of detention. "This is now paraded as the considered policy of the Government of India and the basis on which the Viceroy refused Mr. Rajagopalachari permission to see Gandhiji without even consulting the Executive Council. Later in the day when the Council did meet, it had H.E.'s decision as well as the communique placed before it. Reversal of the decision would have meant a lack of confidence in the Viceroy's judgment".



A Muslim politician who could have helped in promoting a communal settlement if only, in the words of Shiva Rao, "he had shown greater political courage", passed away in Lahore on December 27. He was Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Premier of Punjab. "He made no secret of his anxiety", said Shiva Rao, "to come to terms with the Congress, but it seems Delhi discouraged him from doing anything which might have the effect of creating a split in the ranks of Muslim Leaguers or weakening Mr. Jinnah's leadership. He was very near achieving a settlement more than once, the latest occasion being last February when he and Maulana Azad discussed a formula which provided for Muslims in the Muslim majority areas exercising the right of self-determination after 10 or 15 years if the experience of functioning within a single federation during that period should prove unhappy for such units. But immediately came the Cripps offer and subsequent developments made the resumption of negotiations impossible. Sir Sikander never really believed in Pakistan and had a unique capacity for keeping together divergent elements in the Unionist Party though he frequently and on critical occasions kept both critics and friends guessing as to his real objective."

Endorsing Shiva Rao's estimation of Sikander Hyat Khan, The Hindu said he realised that the solution of India's problems lay in inter-communal agreement and not in the "presentation of impossible demands". It added "Sir Sikander had no use for stunt politics of any kind. He was highly skilled in political diplomacy, in the art of managing men and making agreement between different groups. But he could not stand up to the imperious League President whose ways were so different to his and so disconcerting".

The Hindu was now but a skeleton of its former size. War time austerities and newsprint shortage had forced it to reduce its pages to six on most days of the week and many popular features suffered including picture page, sports and the weekly cinema page. The editorials were restricted to two columns and only the most important speeches were reported and they were condensed. Mofussil news also suffered. The Hindu was to shed its weight further to four pages before it grew back to its former size. Meanwhile the reader had to pay more for a thinner paper. The price was increased from January, 1942, from one anna to one and half annas. Explaining the increase in price, The Hindu said that owing to war conditions there had been "enormous rise in the cost of production which has been borne till now by us. It is no longer possible to avoid asking subscribers to bear a part of it". The price went up further to 2 annas in April, 1943 when the Government imposed price and page control. The Hindu explained that it was compelled to opt for a 32 page per week schedule which under the Government order should cost 2 annas per copy since to continue the old price of 1½ annas would have meant only 24 pages per week which would have drastically curtailed coverage of news. The Hindu felt that under the new arrangement an average of 16 columns would be available for news which will with "careful editing suffice to enable us to give the public a paper that will recognisably be the same Hindu as they have known and liked all these years. We trust that the few issues that have already come out since the new price came into force bear out this modest claim. We need hardly say that it has been no pleasure to us at a time when life is bearing very hard on the vast bulk of the people to make even a relatively small addition to their burden. But like most well known newspapers in the country we have practically no option".

Among the war time ordeals of the citizens of Madras was the bus travel or to put it more expressively the ordeal of sighting a bus. The Hindu described the travails of the bus passenger in this way "Like Hitler (or was it Mr Chamberlain) the citizen of Madras misses the bus every time. When we said sometime ago that the Madras bus service was among the worst in the world we gave our considered opinion, and we see no reason to alter it. It gets worse every day. Letters from missers of buses continue to be written and there is no end to indignation. What is the cause and what the remedy? The cause it seems is the shortage of tyres. The Japs have the rubber and we have to walk. The bus companies have tried all the tricks they know to get more tyres for the ramshackle vehicles which are passed off as buses in the city but the authorities are adamant. The tyres are for the mechanised army and civilian transport must take a back seat — if it can get a seat at all. The crowds of angry would be passengers who wait at bus stops for hours and hours had better think of alternative means of locomotion. Madras is a city of distances and though walking is excellent exercise time is a limiting factor on pedestrian activity. Unfortunately man is not as fleet as the deer, the horse or the bus. Perhaps the horse can come to our aid. Why should not jutka (horse carriage) services be organised as second line of defence?".

# Confrontation with Government

42

**T**HE INDIAN NATIONALIST press lived from day to day during the war years and the national upheaval not knowing what the Government might do to suppress its voice or hamper its functioning in spite of the makeshift understanding forged with them by the All-India Newspaper Editors' conference and its energetic President. And so when a fresh crisis arose towards the end of 1942 following the Government's ban on news relating to Prof. Bhansali's fast it was not surprising. Prof. Bhansali, a Gandhian, had gone on a fast to protest against the behaviour of troops towards civilians in two villages in the Central Provinces. Without consulting the Editors' conference, its President or Committee, the Government banned publication of all news on the fast and also the fact of the ban.

Kasturi Srinivasan called a meeting of the Standing Committee of the A.I.N.E.C. in Bombay in December to consider the situation. The Committee called upon the Government to withdraw the order and on being informed by the Chief Press Adviser who attended the meeting that the Government was unlikely to accept the demand, decided on the drastic step of non-co-operating with the Government. The Committee called upon newspapers to suspend publication for a day as a "protest against a recent order passed by a certain provincial Government involving a flagrant breach of the agreement reached with the A.I.N.E.C.". The Committee also recommended to the newspapers "not to publish until the order is withdrawn (1) all circulars from Government Houses, (2) New Year Honours list (3) all speeches of members of the British Government, the Government of India and Provincial Governments except portions thereof which contain decisions and announcements".

From January 1, 1943 The Hindu blacked out speeches of Ministers and officials and the Honours list. The mood of the Government was reflected in a pre-censorship order served on the Editor of the Hindustan Times by the Chief Commissioner of Delhi. The Madras Government retaliated against The Hindu by withdrawing facilities to its reporters. On January 3 The Hindu said: "We have received the following communication dated January 2, 1943 from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras: 'I am directed to state that as you have not published the new year honours list, the Government have decided to withdraw the facilities given to your reporters to go over to the Secretariat to receive copies of Press communiques, Press notes and other

material officially released to the Press This decision will take effect immediately' " The Hindu on January 4 informed its readers that in addition to the withdrawal of Press facilities at the Secretariat, the Madras Government had also cancelled identification cards issued to its representatives for visiting scenes of air raids

The Hindu wanted to know if the Government of India had been consulted before the Madras Government took their decision "or whether it is the result of Sir Arthur Hope's Government playing off its own bat in the confident belief that where Madras leads others follow At any rate the Madras Government seems to show an imperfect realisation of the fact that there is a certain amount of history behind the action of newspapers which has provoked its ire"

The Hindu said: "If the Madras Government were not actuated by pique it should have in common fairness squarely tackled the serious charge of breach of agreement levelled by the Standing Committee (of the A.I.N.E.C) against certain provincial Governments and either refuted it if that were possible, or if it found that the charge was just bend itself to the task of removing the grievance Instead it has chosen to embark upon what it would no doubt like to think of as a measure of retaliation but what is really a high handed abuse of power Press communiques, Press notes and other material officially released are not in the nature of a gift which may be given or withheld at the pleasure of the administration. They are the recognised means of communication to the public the Government's decisions and reactions to matters of public interest If their purpose is to be fulfilled and if the public is adequately to be informed they should obviously be made available to the newspapers which are in a position to give them the widest measure of publicity. The public has a right to insist that this established course should not be deviated from because the Government feels it has a cause of grievance against the Press and must visit its displeasure on the latter. . . No popular Government would dream of brushing aside the public's rights so lightly as the Madras Government has shown itself ready to do since it would clearly see that such action as that of the Madras Government would really amount to cutting off the nose to spite the face".

The Hindu along with other Nationalist papers suspended publication on January 6, 1943 in accordance with the decision of the President of A.I.N.E.C The confrontation with the Government ended on January 13 when Kasturi Srinivasan announced that the Central Provinces Government had withdrawn the offending order relating to Prof. Bhansali's fast which had led to the Editors' drastic reply. The Government also had conceded the Professor's demand for an enquiry into the alleged excesses of troops and Bhansali had broken his 63 days' fast. In view of these circumstances, Srinivasan advised it was no longer necessary to retain the ban on publication of official circulars speeches etc., recommended by the A.I.N.E.C Committee

Welcoming the end of confrontation with the Government, The Hindu said: "Those who little mindful of the great question of principle involved have criticised the press for a decision which inevitably meant some little inconvenience to the public should have known that it could be no pleasure to the newspapers to place such voluntary restrictions on their own usefulness and that only a paramount sense of duty to the public could have sustained them in

this effort to vindicate the right of the public to be kept informed even during the war and consistently with the need for respecting military secrets, of everything that might be of interest or concern to them. The rights of the public have now been admitted though tardily by the C.P. Government and it is to be hoped that in future neither will be called in question by that Government or by any other". The Hindu published two pictures of Professor Bhansali before and after the fast.

Even as one crisis was weathered, another loomed up which was graver and really a bombshell. It was announced from New Delhi on February 10, 1943 that Gandhiji had decided to go on a three-week fast from that date and that he had commenced the fast. The Government communique said the fast was "according to capacity" and during it "Mr. Gandhi proposes to mix juices of citrus fruit to water to make water drinkable as his wish is not to fast to death but to survive that ordeal". The Government of India offered to release Gandhiji and those whom he wished to be with him for the duration of the fast but Gandhiji said he would abandon the fast if he was released. "In other words", said the Government, "it is now clear that only his unconditional release could prevent him from fasting. This the Government of India are not prepared to concede. Their position remains the same, that is to say, they are ready to set Mr. Gandhi at liberty for the purpose of and duration of the fast. But if Mr. Gandhi is not prepared to take advantage of that fact and if he fasts while in detention, he does so on his own responsibility and at his own risk".

The Government said Gandhiji in his correspondence with the Viceroy had repudiated all responsibility for the consequences which had followed the Quit India demand which he and the Congress Party had put forward. The Government did not accept this contention; nor Gandhiji's attempt to fasten the responsibility on the Government of India.

The Hindu's view was that Gandhiji had decided on the fast "as the only way left open to him of protesting against what he obviously considered to be unwarranted aspersions cast by the Government upon him and the Congress. What has deeply hurt Gandhiji is the Government's suspicion of his bonafides and he apparently feels that only unconditional freedom would enable him to demonstrate to the satisfaction of all reasonable people that there is no justification for this suspicion — and for all the Government's acts of omission and commission which flowed from it and which are not a little responsible for the political impasse and the yawning gulf that divides the Government from the people". The Hindu urged that Gandhiji should be set at liberty forthwith and added, "That is what India, nay, humanity expects from the Government and people of Great Britain".

Shiva Rao wrote from Delhi that it was not clear if the Executive Council was unanimously behind the Viceroy's decision. "When the arrests took place in August the whole world was informed that the decision had the unanimous support of all Indian members of the Council. A similar claim, according to reports freely circulating in Delhi, will not be made this time. It is believed that London gave Delhi a free hand to deal with the situation entirely according to the discretion of the man on the spot, but Delhi has heavy commitments, having assured Provincial Governments six months ago that no questions would be asked regarding the methods by which the movement is put down and secondly there would never be negotiations with the Congress leaders".

An official statement on the casualties in the disturbances said that up to the end of 1942, 940 persons were killed in police and military action. There were firings on 538 occasions and over 60,000 persons were arrested.

Three members of the Executive Council, M. S. Aney, H. P. Mody and N. R. Sarkar, resigned on February 18 on the question of release of Gandhiji. The Delhi Correspondent said the fact that the resignations had been accepted indicated that there was to be no release of Gandhiji "even if his health should deteriorate further and that the Government of India are prepared to take the risk of his inability to go through the three weeks' ordeal. The Viceroy has already met the Governors of Madras and C. P. and will discuss the situation with the Governor of U. P. early next week. So far it is understood the provincial Governors have given 'reassuring' replies regarding possible repercussions in their respective provinces in endorsing a policy of firmness."

The Hindu congratulated the three Executive Councillors on their action and said, "However much Government apologists might try they will not find it easy to persuade world opinion that these resignations have no significance or will have no repercussions on the situation in India."

Even as the Leaders' conference in Delhi on February 20 appealed to the Government of India in the interests of the future of India and of international goodwill to release Gandhiji immediately and unconditionally, a Bombay Government communique on Gandhiji's health reported that his "condition has changed for the worse. His condition is very grave."

Speaking at the Leaders' conference Tej Bahadur Sapru said, "Here is a man whose appeal to the imagination of the country is beyond doubt, who is going to end his life. It is open to you to criticise it but you cannot alter the fact. And if it should materialise and if unfortunately he should die within the next 24 or 48 hours, I tell you the task of reconciliation between the British nation and Hindus, I should like to say the Indian nation, would become extremely difficult. The task of reconciliation not only between Hindus and Muslims but between the different sections of the country will become next to impossible."

In a later Press conference Sapru took it for granted that Gandhiji would die. He said, "I think we should be prepared for the worst, namely, the passing away of Gandhiji, unless a miracle happens. It is not difficult to see how the news will be received by the country. It will evoke the profoundest grief in Indian homes. But I sincerely hope that the country will receive the news with dignified calm and composure and I should very strongly deprecate demonstrations leading to disturbances."

Writing under the heading "On the brink", The Hindu said on February 23: "India lives today under the shadow of impending disaster. 'If the fast is not ended without delay it may be too late to save his life' said the official bulletin on Gandhiji's health issued late on Sunday evening. Through the restrained language of the communique one can easily sense the extreme anxiety felt by the eminent physicians in attendance who include Government's own advisers. But there is no evidence, though another day has almost drawn to its close that the Government of India or their masters in Britain realise the implications of this warning. It would be unbelievable if one did not see it in cold print that the high functionary invested with absolute responsibility for the Government of this country considered it sufficient to counter the prayers of 400 millions for

Gandhiji's immediate release with the lawyer-like plea that 'the responsibility in connection with his fast rests wholly with Mr Gandhi with whom and not with the Government the decision to bring it to an end must rest'".

The Hindu said "The fast as we have repeatedly pointed out in these columns is the last remonstrance of a great national leader who feels that the Government have not only decreed by arbitrary fiat that there shall be no political agitation, except on the lines they approve, for the fulfilment of national aspirations but that they have misrepresented to the world the aims and ideals of the national movement, saddled it with the responsibility for violence which was none of its making and by the sheer use of power prevented the Congress from exposing these tactics and from pursuing its legitimate activities which have among their aims the ending of the present deadlock. The Government may not grant the correctness of any of these contentions but they cannot dispose of them by brushing them aside contemptuously".

The Hindu wrote: "If unimaginative obstinacy on the part of little minds should bring the Gandhian era in India to a tragic close, the consequences to the peace and safety of the world may well nigh be incalculable. The urgency of the occasion cannot be measured by the bureaucratic yardstick of 'prestige' or 'justice'. If Gandhiji is released immediately — even then it may not be very easy to save his life as the doctors have emphasised — nothing will be lost from Britain's point of view, on the other hand much may be granted. No sane man, whether in India or in Britain can contemplate the alternative without dread. The leaders assembled in Delhi have voiced India's despairing appeal to the conscience of Great Britain. By her response will she be judged at the bar of humanity".

On February 25 Kasturi Srinivasan saw Gandhiji at the Agha Khan palace in Poona where he was detained. The Poona Correspondent describing their meeting wrote "Gandhiji invited Mr Srinivasan to sit on his cot by his side and had a talk with him for three minutes. He told him he was following the Editors' conference proceedings as well as those of the Delhi conference".

Gandhiji accomplished a miracle by surviving his fast which he broke on March 3 and The Hindu said the news would be received by his countrymen "with devout thankfulness and profound gratitude to the unseen powers that govern the universe. Who remembering the travail and tribulation that the country has passed through in the past three weeks, which seemed like three millennium, would dare to say that the age of miracles is past? All of us have felt bitter, sad and helpless by turns, but today there will be no room in the hearts of millions of Indians for any emotion save a great peacefulness and an assurance that it is not for nothing that Mahatmaji who has sojourned in the valley of the shadow of death for a while, has won through, unscathed, let us prayerfully hope, by the terrible ordeal".

On May 15, 1943, Gandhiji wrote to Viscount Samuel, the British Liberal leader, enclosing a cutting from The Hindu dated April 8 of the report of Lord Samuel's speech in the House of Lords criticising Gandhiji's fast. In the letter Gandhiji vigorously defended himself but the letter was withheld by the Government of India and not forwarded to Lord Samuel.

The Government of India announced on May 26, 1943, that they had refused to forward a letter from Gandhiji to Jinnah expressing a desire to meet him

Below the news *The Hindu* in a footnote recalled Jinnah's statement at the Muslim League conference at Delhi in April. "What is there to prevent Mr. Gandhi from writing to me direct? Who is there that can prevent him from doing so?" *The Hindu* described the Government's action as "incredibly unwise" and an amazing exhibition of "pettiness". But Jinnah himself took it in a different spirit. He charged Gandhiji with attempting to "embroil the Muslim League to come into a clash with the British Government solely for the purpose of helping his release so that he would be free to do what he pleased thereafter".

*The Hindu* said: "It must have been a decidedly unpleasant experience for Mr. Jinnah to have to own in public that Britain could, when it suited her, deal with him as cavalierly as with any other Indian leader. . . Mr. Jinnah is terribly angry but with the wrong party. But Mr. Jinnah does not believe in negotiations or compromise. He is all for peace — but peace on his own terms. That is not the way to adopt if one is really anxious to find a solution of this extraordinarily difficult problem".

Shiva Rao gave the background to Jinnah's attitude in a dispatch from Delhi. "Having listened to Mr. Jinnah's three-hour address to the Muslim League annual session I can say that the quotation of the passage relevant to Gandhiji did him no injustice. Mr. Jinnah seemed at that stage, obviously embarrassed by criticism, some of which proceeded from within the ranks of the League that he was doing nothing to end the deadlock. Mr. Jinnah threw out the suggestion thinking that Gandhiji would not respond. The Government seem to have known with uncanny precision what Mr. Jinnah's reaction would be to their action. With five provinces under League Ministership and more provinces likely to follow, the idea seems to be why should Jinnah compromise with the Congress".

*The Hindu* had noted earlier in a comment on a House of Lords debate on India that it was obvious that the "one anxiety of the Government is to ensure, so far as that is humanly possible, against any possibility of agreement among Indians themselves emerging. Mr. Amery has started a hare after which the pack is in full cry. India's salvation, we are told, can be found only in some non-parliamentary form of Government. Mr. Amery with his usual astuteness is no doubt telling himself with a chuckle, 'That will o' the wisp should keep them engaged for another quarter of a century at least'".

*The Hindu* was not happy with the role of the British Labour Party in dealing with the Indian situation and it had some harsh words to say of C. R. Attlee, its leader. "Mr. Attlee vies with Mr. Amery in patting Parliament on the back for its knowledge and wisdom in dealing with India, its striking unanimity and its singular large heartedness. Mr. Attlee is particularly fitted to issue such a certificate for did he not see India (or the back of India) with his own eyes, when 15 years ago he was greeted as a member of the Simon Commission with black flags wherever he went? Besides as a good democrat you may depend on him to know a thing or two — that Mr. Gokhale who has been dead these 25 years can bring the Congress back to the middle of the road tomorrow, if he so wills; that Britain is no doubt pledged to give India democratic self-Government but 'we must stand firm where we are' though 'where we are' is very far indeed from democracy or self-Government. As a democrat too, Mr. Attlee objects to the 'dictatorship of the reputed saint quite as much as to the dictatorship of the notorious sinner', but he has no objection at all to the dictatorship of a ruling



caucus which derives its authority from a foreign people who are totally ignorant of and altogether indifferent to India's feelings and which has for its pillars such exemplars of sincerity of purpose as Mr. Amery and such brilliant statesmen as the unbelievably self-satisfied leader of the Labour Party".

V. S. Srinivasa Sastri wrote three open letters in October, 1943, to Amery, Wavell (who had succeeded Linlithgow as Viceroy) and Gandhiji. He appealed to Amery "Demand not of our revered leaders that they stand with tears in their eyes at the gates of the Viceroy's palace and strike penitential palms on aching cheeks. Play the part of the magnanimous victor and the healing statesman. Do not, I adjure, you sow dragon's teeth on the ancient and hallowed soil of this country".

To Wavell Sastri wrote "Can you look beyond the narrow circle of official advisers and invite to yourself all the patriotism of the land which now is held at arm's length because it will not neglect Indian honour and Indian welfare? Can you see in men and women branded as disloyal eager colleagues in the service of India and of the Empire? Anxious eyes and ears from every corner will be directed towards New Delhi to find out whether you weigh well and not merely 'Maxwell'. The great desideratum is a bold measure of appeasement not likely to appear in the firmament of official possibility to be pushed forward to its consummation in the faith that generous confidence begets generous confidence". As regards the communal problem Sastri urged him to leave it to arbitration and added "If you pull arbitration through and settle this problem you will have secured a victory in the realm of civil affairs which any conqueror, in history, living or dead may envy".

Writing to Gandhiji Sastri said Gandhiji was the fittest person to attend the ensuing Peace conference and propagate his mission of love and non-violence. "After several humiliations due to association with earthly causes the hour of exaltation approaches you. I see you, great soul, in a vision of glory, go up the mount of expectancy of a weary waiting crowd, raise high the right hand of blessing and solemnly utter the word which is in all hearts and which comes full of hope and full of meaning from your inspired lips. Come then, bestir yourself. Not a day should be lost. There is so much to do before civilised administration can be restored and competent authorities in the provinces and at the centre can be formed with national aims and appropriate means for the choice of delegates through whom the soul of India can speak to the rest of the world. Don't say you are not free. You can be free if you but realise that you are waited for. Your last movement has not borne the fruit that you wished. Admit what everybody sees. No hesitation need be felt in recognising facts. You yield no doubt, but you yield to fate and not to man. Stoop and conquer".

The Hindu called Sastri's letters "a spirited call for concerted and constructive action to end the deadlock".

Linlithgow's viceroyalty which was ending was notable for the Bengal famine which took away millions of lives. The first reports of starvation deaths on the streets of Calcutta appeared in The Hindu on August 23, 1943. The Hindu wrote "Bengal is in the grip of a grave economic crisis. Thousands of poor are daily flocking to Calcutta from the districts where acute distress is prevailing in the vain hope of finding some sustenance. Sir K. Nazimuddin (Prime Minister) and his friends who were loud in their protestations that the first thing that would claim their attention on taking office would be the food

situation, have done next to nothing to meet the crisis. The steady flow of starving people from the countryside to which pointed attention — as an index of the gravity of the situation — was drawn on the floor of the Bengal Assembly still continues”.

After referring to cases of starvation deaths and formation of special corpse removal staff by the police commissioner, *The Hindu* said: “This shows that death from starvation in the ‘second city’ has assumed the proportion of an epidemic” Writing again on August 25, *The Hindu* said “The pictures we reproduce on another page by courtesy of the *Statesman* of the unfortunates who swarm to Calcutta in search of food only to find death from starvation in the streets of the Second City of the Empire are harrowing evidence of the terrible ordeal through which Bengal is passing and of the tragic inadequacy of the administration, both provincial and central, in the face of such a crisis. Women who faint from sheer exhaustion while waiting in endless queues, children whose bones stick out of their skins — if by God’s mercy they should survive they will never grow to healthy manhood — hundreds of destitute folk huddled on the pavements exposed to all the rigours of sun and rain — it is a nightmare picture that may well make men question whether we have not slipped back overnight into sheer barbarism. Famines are nothing new in India and during its worst visitations in the past there were deaths from starvation in this or that area where the crops had failed and supplies could not be had from outside because of the primitive conditions of transport facilities. But it is something new in the experience of this country that hundreds of people should die for lack of a morsel in the streets and on the outskirts of a premier city as a result of what has been described as a man-made famine while life goes on much as usual in other respects”

*The Hindu* published five gruesome pictures of starvation deaths in Calcutta with this introduction reproduced from the *Statesman*: “We publish on this page photographs showing typical daily scenes in and around Calcutta to illustrate the present plight of thousands of human beings throughout India’s distressed province, Bengal. Such scenes are commonest on the “Second city’s” outskirts where a moving population wanders pitiably in search of food”.

Writing on a debate in the House of Lords on the Bengal famine, *The Hindu* said: “How could the Bengal Government have avoided or mitigated the consequences of such a decision as that a huge wartime army must be fed from the internal resources of a country which at the best of times were insufficient to the needs of the civil population or of the boat denial policy which Lord Munster admitted had resulted in lack of small craft and thus hampered the distribution of food-stuffs? It is Britain’s war policy in India, faithfully executed by the subordinate administration in Delhi that has brought about inflation, maldistribution of the not too abundant resources and gross neglect of basic civilian needs and these have culminated in the Bengal tragedy. It is neither by blaming the Governments in the provinces nor by taking shelter behind their autonomy that Britain can find a solution or justify herself at the bar of world opinion. The solution lies in establishing without delay a national Government with plenary powers”.

As Linlithgow prepared to leave the shores of India after completing his term as Viceroy, *The Hindu* wrote on October 19 “After seven long years as Viceroy,

Lord Linlithgow leaves India this week. The event if it will not be hailed with much relief, will cause few regrets either. The record of few Viceroys has been so singularly barren of achievement though none of them had such superb opportunities for a display of constructive statesmanship that might have healed the long breach between Britain and India and given a decisive turn to the forward march of humanity".

Referring to his handling of the political situation especially since the war began, *The Hindu* said "It is best to spread a merciful veil over it. Apparently that is what he himself would prefer to do, did not all the world note with astonishment that his farewell speech to the Legislature in August did not contain a single reference to the flower of Indian leadership immured as in a living tomb and to the enormous legacy of bitterness and ill-will which by his unimaginative pursuit of the policy of iron hand he is leaving behind him? We can only hope for Lord Linlithgow's peace of mind in his retirement that his errors and miscalculations will not be perpetuated in this fashion".

Shiva Rao described the mood of the Viceroy in an article in *The Hindu*. Shortly after the Cripps Mission had ended in failure, Lord Linlithgow sent for Shiva Rao and took him to task for his dispatch to the *Manchester Guardian* in which he had stated that if only the Viceroy and his senior advisers in New Delhi had adopted a more helpful and co-operative attitude the Cripps Mission might have been crowned with success. "I see you hold me responsible for Sir Stafford's failure", the Viceroy said with some annoyance. "You are old enough to remember Mr. Montagu's visit to India during the first world war. Did he see any of the Indian leaders alone without Lord Chelmsford (Viceroy) being present?"

"I admitted", said Shiva Rao, "he was right on that point but thought Sir Stafford kept him fully informed of developments at all stages". Lord Linlithgow told Shiva Rao that his intervention in the negotiations would have been unsolicited and was liable therefore to serious misunderstanding. For 18 months thereafter, Shiva Rao said, the Viceroy during the rest of his term did not send for him.

Shiva Rao added: "Looking back I can see how earnestly he strove for a time, within the limitation of his office and his conservative outlook, for a settlement with the Congress leaders. So long as there was a prospect, however remote, that they might accept his terms, Mr. Jinnah received no encouragement".

Shiva Rao had in a dispatch to *The Hindu* suggested that the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council with a majority of Indians enjoying the people's confidence was possible under the constitution and would be an impressive gesture. The Viceroy discussed the suggestion with Shiva Rao at Simla and "seemed at first disposed to be attracted by it. But he was apprehensive; it was war-time and he might have had to deal with awkward claims and demands from some of the Congress leaders in the Executive Council. And you must not forget, Linlithgow added with a candour which was not common with him, 'Mr. Churchill is now in the Cabinet (at that time Churchill had not become Prime Minister)'. Until the Ramgarh session of the Congress Lord Linlithgow did not abandon hope of a settlement. But the main resolution of the session denouncing British "exploitation" of India pained him deeply. He was a different man from that point. He could be stern and unbending, even harsh in the implementation of his policy. One cannot easily overlook the arrangements his

officials made (doubtless with his full approval) for Gandhiji's cremation in the detention camp in Poona in anticipation of his death during his fast".

Shiva Rao figured often in Linlithgow's correspondence with Amery, Secretary of State for India. He called him a leftist and thought his dispatches to the Manchester Guardian were responsible for the criticism by the Guardian of the Government of India's handling of the political situation.

The Hindu did not think the auguries were good for Lord Wavell, Linlithgow's successor. It questioned the appointment of a soldier by breaking a tradition set up by Lord Curzon that the army should be subordinate to the civil power and not vice versa, and "that too at a time when practically all powers of Government are vested in the hands of the Viceroy and the individual who happens to hold that post can exercise virtually untrammelled dictatorship over the lives and destinies of 400 millions. The war exigency will not assuredly serve as an excuse. As Lord Morley once said in Parliament that England had waged 111 wars in the 19th century which had not cost her a penny, because though he did not say so, India footed the bill and incidentally drained her blood on many a battlefield. If nevertheless there was not felt to be any overwhelming need to employ a military man as Viceroy in those days, how can so reactionary an innovation be justified now?"

The Hindu added "While wishing Sir Archibald Wavell well in his new task, we cannot help feeling that the auguries are heavily against his making a success of it. The people of India in their present temper are bound to resent his appointment as yet another proof that Mr. Churchill remains as hostile to Indian aspirations and as contemptuous of public opinion as ever. If Sir Archibald Wavell is to make headway against this tide of feeling he will have to stand up to Mr. Churchill and tell him that without delay he must get a move on in India."

The veteran Parliamentarian and freedom fighter, S. Satyamurthi passed away on March 27, 1943, before he could see Independence dawn on his country for which he had fought so much inside and outside the legislative forums in the Centre and in his home province. For a long time he ran a political column in The Hindu commenting on current topics with a verve and zest which was as brilliant as his oratory. His connection with The Hindu was very close and it began in the days of Kasturiranga Iyengar who had a special affection for him. He was deputed to Britain on behalf of the Congress for propaganda during the time reforms were in the air and he wrote a weekly dispatch to The Hindu on his work in England. Kasturi Srinivasan was as fond of him if not more than his father and while he lay seriously ill in hospital Satyamurthi told one of his visitors, the late A. G. Venkatachari, how much he was indebted to Kasturi Srinivasan financially and in every other way.

Satyamurthi was feared in the Central Assembly by the official bloc for his supplementaries and Sir James Grigg, Finance Member, who was once called by an opposition member as "Sir James Hitler", (according to Durga Das in his "From Curzon to Nehru and after") nicknamed Satyamurthi as "Supplemurthi" who fired supplementary questions at the Treasury benches with the rattle of a machine gun and especially delighted in crossing swords with Sir James Grigg. Satyamurthi made the supplementary question a fine art and he himself explained it in this way: "I should like to say as a notorious culprit in that respect (in putting supplementary questions) that the attempt

of the opposition in putting questions and especially supplementary questions is not only to elicit information but to put the Government in the wrong and to raise a laugh at their expense in the House if possible and in the country certainly. Of course, the Hon. the President pursues us relentlessly, pulls us up often and when things become very difficult he simply says 'Next question' and we have to collapse".

Sir F. E. James, who was his bitter opponent from the European benches in the Assembly, and his bosom friend outside the House, described him thus. "Like the Niagara he was torrential, deafening and unceasing; but unlike the Niagara he had never been known to freeze into silence".

The Hindu paid Satyamurthi a fine tribute. "He achieved", it wrote, "with effortless ease distinction on many fronts and he will be remembered in the history of the national movement as a great tribune of the people. He loved the good things of the world; but few of the rewards that the world prizes came his way. He would have been more than human if he had not felt these mischances as slights to his worth. But he did not allow them to sour him; his outlook was fundamentally too cheerful and healthy. Above all he was a born fighter to whom the fight was the thing. A very Rupert of debate, master of the startling repartee and the punch that deflates without leaving a sting, he shone supreme as a gladiator in the parliamentary arena".

The new Viceroy, Lord Wavell, told the Central Legislature on February 17, 1944 that he saw "no reason to release those responsible for the declaration of August 8, 1942, until I am convinced that the policy of non co-operation and even of obstruction has been withdrawn not in sack cloth and ashes — that helps no one — but in recognition of a mistaken and unprofitable policy". He said the Cripps offer still stood and also stressed the unity of India. "You cannot alter geography", he said. "From the point of view of defence, relations with the outside world, of many internal and external economic problems India is a natural unit. What arrangements you decide to make for the two great communities and certain other important minorities as well as the Indian states to live within that unit and to make the best use of its wealth and opportunities is for Indians to decide".

The Hindu remarked that Wavell's "tentative conclusions" as he called them "were assuredly not of such a character as to encourage the hope that he will have the courage and the resource to hack a way through the thorny jungle of British bungling, procrastination and obsession with outmoded notions of prestige, to a solution that will heal the sores of the past, promote unity and further the great purposes to which the energy of all great nations must be diverted if the world that emerges from the war is not to be an even sadder one than it is today".

On February 22, 1944, the death of Kasturba Gandhi in the Aga Khan palace in Poona in detention was announced. In a tribute The Hindu said: "Her life was a long act of faith. Made for happy domesticity, for the best part of her long life, she knew less than most women the comforts of privacy or the amenities of ordered existence. It was one long fight in a cause which in the early days she but imperfectly understood, but through all the trials and tribulations of which she had a greater share than falls to most mortals she was sustained by a supreme fidelity to duty as she conceived it and by a child-like trust in the man by whose side she trod so bravely".

In a reply to Lord Wavell who had offered his condolences Gandhiji wrote. "We were a couple outside the ordinary. It was in 1906 that by mutual consent and after unconscious trials we definitely adopted self-restraint as a rule of life. To my great joy this knit us together as never before. We ceased to be two different entities. Without my wishing it she chose to lose herself in me. The result was she became truly my better half. She was a woman always of very strong will which in our early days I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her quite unwittingly to become my teacher in the art and practice of non-co-operation. The practice began with my own family. When I introduced it in 1906 in the political field it came to be known by the more comprehensive and specially coined name of satyagraha."

Gandhiji himself fell ill with Malaria in May, 1944 and there was general demand all over the country for his release. The Hindu which wrote more than one editorial urging his release, was critical of the fact that the Government had not given full particulars of his condition. "It is a pity that the Government should treat the illness of India's great leader as if it were a military campaign about which nothing but the vaguest communique can be given to the public", The Hindu wrote. "Surely there is no need for secrecy in a matter which cannot supply information to the enemy or endanger anyone in any way. The Government bear a special responsibility at a time when Gandhiji is in their hands as a political prisoner to give the public prompt, copious and frequent reports of his condition and the treatment he is getting so that it may feel reassured."

Gandhiji was released on the same day as The Hindu editorial appeared (May 7, 1944). A Delhi announcement said Gandhiji was being released unconditionally on medical grounds. The Hindu was happy the release had come in time "to produce the expected beneficial reactions on Gandhiji's health and that his condition would take a turn for the better".

L. S. Amery, Secretary of State, made it clear in a letter to a Labour member of Parliament that it was not proposed to release Congress leaders as they had not withdrawn the August resolution. The Hindu argued that "Congress leaders do not admit they are in any way responsible for the disturbances that happened after they were arrested, as for revising Congress policy they maintain that it is a matter for the Congress organisation as a political body to consider and decide upon in freedom and in the light of present day conditions in the country. If the Government are really anxious to secure the co-operation of the Congress they should set free the Congressmen in detention thus providing conditions in which constructive and dispassionate political action might become possible".

It was revealed on July 12, 1944, that negotiations conducted by C. Rajagopalachari with Jinnah on a communal formula had failed because Jinnah would neither accept nor reject it but said he would place it before the League Executive which C. R. did not like. The Hindu analysed the formula and said that subject to certain conditions "which are well recognised as pre-requisites to the application of the principle of self-determination, the scheme applies that principle to areas the population of which is predominantly Muslim. After the war, a commission was to be appointed to demarcate continuous districts in the north-west and east of India where the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated a plebiscite would decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. The recognition of the right of secession

was made subject to two conditions. One that it would be binding only in the event of full transfer of power by Britain and the other that in the event of separation mutual agreements should be entered into for safeguarding defence and commerce and communication and for other essential purposes. There would be a substratum of unity left and the two states would act jointly in respect of certain common interests"

The Hindu said the scheme sought to reconcile the two-fold Congress principles of independence and unity with the Muslim demand for self-rule. "Mr Jinnah has more than once stated that the only thing that stands in the way of India's independence is the refusal of the Congress to recognise the right of Muslims to self-determination. The correspondence now published shows how incompatible his present attitude is with that claim".

The publication of the C.R. formula which it was said was supported by Gandhiji provoked a controversy in the columns of *The Hindu*. There were statements and letters for and against the formula and among vigorous opponents were V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer who said it would disrupt the unity of India. From Wardha *The Hindu* Correspondent reported talks by Bengal leaders with Gandhiji. They expressed their fears of a possible division of their province. "Bengal leaders are emphatic", the Correspondent said, "that it would be difficult for the people of Bengal who had struggled with good results against the Curzonian partition three decades ago, to yield to any kind of partition now or in the future as Bengal situated as at present is culturally and linguistically one single homogeneous unit, perhaps the largest in India"

Gandhiji met Jinnah in Bombay in August to discuss the formula. On the eve of the talks, the Bombay Correspondent speculated on Jinnah's attitude. He said Jinnah's attitude had not undergone any change. "There exists a fundamental gap — a big one too — between the approach to the problem of Gandhiji and that of Jinnah. Gandhiji is chiefly concerned with the independence of India after the war and the transfer of the civil administration of India during the war to the representatives of the people. He is prepared to concede self-determination to Muslims to decide their future after the war. Mr. Jinnah is not at all concerned with any war-time arrangement. In his view a war-time Central Government is a question of detail. The main issue is the establishment of Pakistan the principle of which Mr. Jinnah says has been accepted by Gandhiji by his endorsement of C.R.'s proposals and by the British Government through the Cripps' proposals. The aim of the Bombay talks, according to Mr. Jinnah, is to arrange for the surgical operation — to delimit the provinces. The League President does not favour any formula which leaves the establishment of Pakistan in doubt or to any future contingency. He takes Pakistan as a reality, an established affair".

As the Gandhiji-Jinnah talks which began on September 9 dragged on for days and weeks the Bombay Correspondent wrote: Whether Jinnah is winning over Gandhiji to his side or vice versa one cannot say at this stage. What transpires every day between the two is a sealed book and the secret is well preserved on both sides. Mr. Jinnah does not discuss with anyone what passes in their talks. Gandhiji, it is presumed, with Mr. Jinnah's consent, has disclosed the trend of their talks only to Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, the author of the proposals which form the basis of the negotiations. Mr. Rajagopalachari for

his part is keeping the secret extremely well. As Gandhiji has made an appeal to the Press not to speculate on the progress of the conversations except to read hope in their faces I do not propose to say anything regarding the trend of the conversation. But I am free to reveal that Mahatma Gandhi has won Mr. Jinnah's confidence as medical adviser. Finding Mr. Jinnah pale and gaunt looking, Gandhiji has succeeded in persuading the League leader to try nature cure treatment. He sent on Thursday morning to Mr. Jinnah his nature cure specialist, Dinshaw Mehta of Poona who has been attending on him for the last 10 years and more. After giving Mahatma Gandhi his daily massage Dr. Dinshaw went to Mr. Jinnah's residence on Thursday morning and attended on him for over an hour. Both leaders will now have in the mornings massage and tub baths."

An A.P.I. message from Bombay on September 27 said the Gandhi-Jinnah talks had "virtually failed" "Only a miracle can now save the situation", it quoted a prominent leader as saying. Two days later, The Hindu published the text of the letters exchanged by the two leaders which covered two pages of the paper. Commenting on the failure of the talks, Gandhiji said he could not help feeling that the creation of two completely independent states without some friendly arrangements in regard to some common interests might mean war to the knife and therefore was an inadmissible proposition. In this connection Gandhiji used the term "confederation". Gandhiji said: "My experience of the precious three weeks confirms me in the view that the presence of a third power hinders the solution. A mind enslaved cannot act as if it was free"

The Hindu thought that considering the attitude that Jinnah had all along adopted the failure of the talks was perhaps inevitable. "What Mr. Jinnah invited Gandhiji to do was to give his unreserved and unquestioning support to the Lahore resolution (demanding Pakistan) leaving it to Mr. Jinnah himself to interpret its scope and contents as he pleased and undertake on this basis to persuade the Congress to accept it. Since this could be hardly called free negotiations, the essence of which is to give and take, it is not surprising that even Gandhiji prepared though he was for many things, was not prepared to give his support blind-folded to a position which may be clear and concrete to Mr. Jinnah and his followers but which is clear to none else"

On the eve of the Gandhiji-Jinnah talks E. V. Ramaswami Naicker wrote to Jinnah about the claim for Dravidistan (to which Jinnah had pledged his support in his presidential address at the Muslim League Conference in Madras). He said: "I have been watching carefully the proceedings of Mr. Rajagopalachari's formula towards solving the deadlock and your desire to receive Mr. Gandhi at your residence in Bombay on your return which will be probably about the middle of August. It is welcomed in political circles. Though I have no full hope there are signs of change, as our opponents have come forward themselves to settle the Hindu-Muslim question, especially in relation to the Cripps offer. I need not say that Congressites are experts in twisting words and to give occult sense. They can say anything and give meaning in whatever manner they think. Though we do not depend upon them you know very well that we should be vigilant and careful in the negotiation. It is clear that a general election with Hindus and Muslims as well as Aryans and Dravidians will give hardship to both of us. Kindly excuse me for reminding you about our discussions relating to Pakistan and Dravidistan while we were at



Madras and Delhi and your assurance that you would plead for both questions as one. Here in South India I have considered both the questions as one and done my best to solve the problem as far as possible. Yourself know very well that there could be no Pakistan and independence of Muslim India until and unless independence was achieved for the rest of the nations".

Jinnah replied on August 17, 1944. "I have always had much sympathy for the people of Madras 90 per cent of whom are non-Brahmins and if they desire to establish their Dravidistan it is entirely for your people to decide on this matter. I can say no more and certainly I cannot speak on your behalf. I have made the position clear to you and your colleagues when I was in Madras more than once but hitherto I have noticed that in your activities you have been undecisive. If the people of your province really desire Dravidistan then it is for them to assert themselves. I hope that you will understand my position that I can speak only for Muslim India but you have my assurance that whenever and wherever I have a say in the matter you will find me supporting any just and fair claim or demand of any section of the people of India and particularly the non-Brahmins of India".

It is to be noted that the correspondence was released at a time when Ramaswami Naicker was expelled from the Justice Party in view of his forming the Dravida Kazhagam whose objectives were at variance with the aims and objects of the Justice Party.

The Hindu in November welcomed C. Rajagopalachari's suggestion for international arbitration to settle the Indian question. It said: "If Britain is really anxious to terminate her responsibilities in India and finds that voluntary agreement is not likely in the near future why should she not refer these issues to a Board of Arbitrators in which the major Indian interests as well as she have confidence?"

Meanwhile, the Radical leader M. N. Roy had produced a constitution for India which The Hindu described as a "thing of shreds and patches, a strange hotch-potch of the American and Soviet systems with a liberal infusion of the principles of the Reform Bill and garnished with an embarrassing profusion of constitutional gadgets — the referendum, recall etc." and went on to say: "Mr. Roy is undoubtedly a man of great talents. But when we are solemnly assured by him that Britain is our much misunderstood friend, that America is the wolf in the sheep's clothing, that the older parties are all tainted with Fascism, that Mr. Roy is the only true democrat who hates Indian capitalism like poison — though curiously enough he seems to have no objection to capitalism retaining a very considerable role in India's future — the Indian people may well be forgiven for preferring to admire such mental agility and powers of improvisation from a distance and depending for guidance on tried leaders who respect their intelligence".

What did Wavell think of M. N. Roy? In a letter to Amery the Viceroy wrote: "I had a letter from M. N. Roy, the Social Democratic leader, whom I saw lately, asking almost in so many words for seats for himself and one or two of his party on my council and for a subsidy for propaganda. He has more in him than most Indian politicians I think and I have him in mind as possibly of use; but as I minuted on his letter, I am Viceroy and have no mind to be Vice-Roy".

The affairs of William Phillips, personal envoy of President Roosevelt, occupied much space in The Hindu in August, 1944. The paper published agency

reports from Washington of his secret report to the President disclosed by Drew Pearson, the columnist and also a Senator's disclosure of British demand for Phillips' recall from India. In his report Phillips said India was not giving full support to the war and the Indian army fighting with the allies was a mercenary army and he stressed the importance and urgency of coming to terms with Indian nationalist leaders.

Shiva Rao in a report from Delhi said: "Mr Phillips was the very antithesis of Col. Johnson, his predecessor, in many respects. He spoke English without a trace of Americanism, was correct in everything he said and did and shunned the limelight. But he kept himself busy throughout the five months he spent in India. He had seen Mr. Churchill before leaving London for India and had obtained an assurance that he would have full facilities to study the Indian situation, see anybody he liked and make any suggestions he thought practicable. Armed with such an authority he went round the country, interviewed politicians, officials, soldiers, businessmen and princes. Among the politicians two impressed him most — C. Rajagopalachari and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. In the first week of February Mr Phillips approached Lord Linlithgow with a request to let him see Gandhiji. The Viceroy pointed out that Gandhiji was about to commence a fast. Therefore the suggestion could not be entertained at that stage. Mr Phillips meanwhile clarified his own ideas and gradually evolved some general propositions which he felt sare could be made the basis for an all-round settlement. By coincidence or deliberately perhaps Mr Phillips arrived in Washington on the eve of the Churchill-Roosevelt meeting in May last year. Remembering the Prime Minister's remark to him in London in the previous December, Mr. Phillips forced himself upon Mr. Churchill and placed his outline of a solution for the Indian problem before him. Mr Churchill was indignant. "You don't know India", he burst out in effect, "and your solution will mean widespread disorder and handing over India to the Japanese." Mr Phillips, persistent and undeterred by Mr. Churchill's rebuke fought for the President's intervention. More politely perhaps but with equal firmness, Mr. Churchill made it clear to Mr. Roosevelt that India could not be made a subject of discussion. Was Mr Phillips' return to India thwarted and beaten at every stage? He retained his post as President's personal envoy at New Delhi but preferred an assignment in a temporary and special job in London".

(Phillips was prevented from returning to India by the persistent and determined opposition of Lord Linlithgow and the firm line taken by Churchill with Roosevelt).

The Hindu did not comment on the Phillips episode until September 13, 1944 at the time of the Quebec talks between President Roosevelt and Churchill. It then said: "The interest of the American people, as distinct from their Government, in Indian affairs too has reached a stage when it may not be possible for Mr. Roosevelt — especially because of the impending election and the proceedings already initiated in the Senate — any longer to refrain from "acquainting Britain formally with the existence of a public opinion in America favouring freedom for India."

In another editorial in November The Hindu supported William Phillips' proposal on the Indian situation made in a letter to President Roosevelt. His proposal was that a conference of Indian leaders should be summoned under the presidentship of an American and on the invitation of the American

President to discuss and agree on the future of India. He also suggested that Russia and China should be asked to interest themselves in the proceedings of the conference. "The proposal offers", said *The Hindu*, "a bold and statesman-like way of tackling a problem which if allowed to deteriorate might conceivably become a world menace. There is no reason why if Britain is serious in desiring to be relieved of her responsibility for India she should not gladly accept it. Mr. Churchill will not like it of course as Mr. Phillips has shrewdly remarked. But it seems to us that it is the privilege and the responsibility of Mr. Roosevelt to bring it home to the British Premier that he cannot oppose it consistently with his country's pledge to India and his own commitments to world opinion."

Nothing came out of the Phillips' proposal and it died a natural death. Secretary of State Amery was equally cold to Gandhiji's offer made in an interview to a British correspondent, Stewart Gelder, in July. Gandhiji had said that a national Government if formed would give complete support to war effort. He also said there would be no going back to 1942 and no restarting of mass civil disobedience movement. Gandhiji's offer took the official world in Delhi completely by surprise, wrote Shiva Rao. *The Hindu* said the proposals made by Gandhiji "are those which represent the widest measure of agreement among the Indian political parties and can be implemented only with the co-operation of all of them, and in principle they have been accepted by Britain in the past as representing a basis of agreement. If, now that Gandhiji has actively sponsored them, Britain tries to back out, such an attitude can be capable of only one interpretation — that she was never serious in holding out the promise of self-government to India."

Amery rejected Gandhiji's proposals on the ground that they were not "free from obscurities and reservations on particular points...". He said the demand for immediate recognition of India's Independence under a Provisional Government was just the one upon which negotiations with the Congress broke down two years back and were bound to break down again. "So long as those are the basis for his proposals they obviously do not form even the starting point for a profitable discussion either with Lord Wavell or the other interned Congress leaders. They are in no sense a response to the Viceroy's invitation to Mr. Gandhi to produce constructive proposals".

The Hindu's reply to Amery was that the British Government "are recklessly piling up bitterness against themselves by their contemptuous attitude towards public opinion and the light-hearted disregard for basic liberties displayed in their continuing to keep in jail some of the most respected men in India".

The Indian political situation was typified in a cartoon by Low under the caption "Day of silence". It showed Wavell sitting cross-legged on the steps of the Viceroy's House with a diminutive Amery pictured as a goat by his side, while Gandhiji stands to hand over his new plan.

As days and weeks passed without America exerting any noticeable pressure on Britain with regard to India, *The Hindu* became disillusioned and said: "The trouble with America has been not that she has lacked sympathy for India's cause but that her official authorities have been excessively deferential to British prejudices and have not felt the urge to press on Britain with sufficient insistence the need for a big forward march in India forthwith. India

is almost the only issue of world significance on which President Roosevelt has not taken a public stand. What is required is that America should be prepared to sponsor in concert with Russia a positive and constructive approach towards a solution of the problem. One such approach was suggested by Mr. Phillips in his second letter to President Roosevelt. Whether that is favoured or some other alternative is deemed more suitable, the principal allies should realise that unless the Indian question is solved to the satisfaction of the Indian people the peace will be lost though the war has been won. They must not make the mistake of supposing that Europe and Asia could be dealt with separately and on radically different assumptions. That is Hitler's way".

When President Roosevelt died on April 13, 1945 even while Allied victory in Europe was in sight, *The Hindu* praised him as a war leader whose passing away "is an equally sad blow for the United Nations, for he was undoubtedly one of the main architects of victory". The *Hindu* however added that there was "more than a suspicion in the later years that Mr. Roosevelt was so engrossed in the difficult art of managing men and getting on with them that he sacrificed some of his cherished ideals. This feeling affected his standing among the freedom loving peoples of the world. As co-signatory of the Atlantic Charter and author of the Four Freedoms they expected him to speak out when Mr. Churchill for example, refused to discuss the future of India and Hongkong. He preferred to keep quiet. No doubt he convinced himself that he was acting in the interest of the common prosecution of the war. Such sacrifices of principle in the interests of expediency detracted from his world reputation as an idealist from whom dependent peoples could have expected enthusiastic support in their fight for freedom".

V. K. Narasimhan, Assistant Editor of *The Hindu*, was among the ten Indian journalists who visited the front-line in Italy as guests of the 15th Army Group on March 14, 1945. A report describing their visit said: "After a conference with General Mark Clark they visited front-line troops of the Tenth Indian Division where they got their first baptism of fire. While on a tour of the Eighth Indian Division, Narasimhan flew in an "observation post" plane to direct gun fire, while his fellow journalists remained on gun sites below. Madras jawans crowded round *The Hindu* representative, asking him questions about India and giving him special messages for their home folk".

Writing on the conditions of Indian soldiers at the war front, *The Hindu* said "The Indian soldier who fights on foreign soil is in a peculiar position. Consciously or unconsciously the subordinate political status of India affects his behaviour and outlook. He cannot carry himself as a soldier from a free country. His officers are predominantly British. The visiting journalists were assured by the commanders everywhere that there was no question of discrimination and that they were anxious to see that the gallant men from India received the same consideration as other allied troops. Yet the impression was inescapable that the Indian soldier was not getting the best that others were getting. If Indian troops were not getting the best films, good entertainment parties, radio and gramophone sets that would work, the blame was laid entirely at the doors of the Government of India. It is extraordinary that the Indian soldier should get such treatment, seeing that the financial provision for his welfare is 15sh per head per annum while the corresponding provision for the British soldier is only 5sh. The Indian soldier who cannot possibly be

expected to go into the intricacies of the Indian welfare organisation may be excused if comparing his position with that of other allied troops he draws the inference that he is not getting the same treatment as others. Whatever is done for the Indian soldier is not done as a matter of right but in a patronising spirit as though anything was good enough for him.

The war in Europe ended on May 7, 1945 with the German surrender at Rheims. "Today the Allies celebrate their great and crushing victory", The Hindu wrote. "It is not a victory won without tremendous sacrifices. 'Blood, tears, toil and sweat' has been paid by the peoples of many countries, not the least India, so that the people of Europe may be rid of Nazism and Fascism. . . There can be no guarantee of peace in our time unless the nations of the world resolve to end imperialism and all it signifies. It is disquieting to note in some of the speeches at San Francisco a repetition of the ideas that were dominant at Versailles. That way lies the road to world war III. It would be a great tragedy if the forces of reaction defeated on the battlefields of Europe become triumphant in the councils of the Allies."

The San Francisco conference which laid the foundation for the United Nations was covered for The Hindu by Shiva Rao who for the first time got a by-line. Special articles on the conference were written by Michael Foot, Special Correspondent of the London Daily Herald.

Shiva Rao's presence at San Francisco gave him a splendid opportunity to cable daily stories not only of what happened at San Francisco conference but also what delegates said and talked about India, colonies etc., and also to report Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit's activities as the unofficial Indian ambassador at San Francisco. In one of his cables Shiva Rao spoke of Britain's reluctance to concede the right of self-Government to its colonies and dependent territories, "the general policy apparently being 'the establishment of a sacred trust of civilisation to promote to the utmost the well being of the inhabitants of these territories within the world community' but stopping at the development of self-government to forms appropriate to circumstances of each territory."

Meanwhile, the war against Japan continued and for the first time in its history, The Hindu had a war correspondent to cover the South-East region. He was T. G. Narayanan whose first war story with his by-line (an innovation for The Hindu) from the Imphal front appeared in April, 1944. Also breaking tradition, The Hindu published a picture of Narayanan. There were almost daily dispatches from him.

Narayanan moved on to Rangoon after it was recaptured from the Japanese and sent a dispatch on the ravages of war in the Burmese capital. He was probably the first correspondent to unveil the mystery surrounding the Indian National Army (I.N.A.) formed by Subhas Bose from among the Indian troops taken prisoner by the Japanese. In his dispatch he described how the I.N.A. was formed, how it fared in Burma and of its surrender to the British. He wrote: "It is claimed on behalf of the I.N.A. that it is completely officered and trained by Indians and that in this respect it has neither sought nor received any aid from the Japanese army. Additional claims made are that all caste and communal distinctions have been abolished in the I.N.A. especially as regards food and that training has been given completely through the medium of Hindusthani. The I.N.A. also has an anthem of its own and its salutation is

"Jai Hind". Some of the officers of the I.N.A. are from the regular Indian army, a number of them either Sandhurst or Dehru Dun trained and some of them coming from families well known in India and for their traditional loyalty to the Crown. In its ranks it also counts a small regiment completely composed and officered by women, the Rani of Jhansi regiment. The I.N.A. so far as is known has two or three schools in Malaya and Thailand for training officers and several camps for training the rank and file. The battle record of the I.N.A. has not been one of general success. Some of their brigades fought in the Arakan and Manipur in the early months of 1941. Many of them became casualties, more went back and isolated groups surrendered. I met a few of the surrendered groups during the siege of Imphal and they looked wretched, starving men, very badly equipped and lacking all enthusiasm to fight. They appeared as if they had been dragooned to fight and the Japanese who were supposed to co-operate with them had apparently left them short of food and ammunition. Any enthusiasm the I.N.A. had for co-operating with the Japanese Army and any hope of success they harboured would seem to have disappeared since the retreat from Imphal and since then the story of the I.N.A. has been one of surrender".

The Bengal famine inquiry commission's report was published in May, 1945. The Commission, which was headed by Sir John Woodhead and included Sir S. V. Ramamurthi, said "It has been for us a sad task to inquire into the course and causes of the Bengal famine. We have been haunted by a deep sense of tragedy. A million and a half of the poor of Bengal fell victim to circumstances for which they themselves were not responsible. Society together with its organs failed to protect its weaker members. Indeed there was a moral and social breakdown as well as an administrative breakdown". The Commission said the economic level of the population previous to the famine was low in Bengal as in the greater part of India. Agricultural production was not keeping pace with the growth of population. There was no "margin of safety" as regards either health or wealth. These underlying conditions common indeed to many other parts of India were favourable to the occurrence of famine accompanied by high mortality. The Commission said: "Enormous profits were made out of the calamity and in the circumstances profits for some meant death for others. A large part of the community lived in plenty while others starved and there was much indifference in the face of suffering. Corruption was widespread throughout the province and in many classes of society". The Commission criticised the Government of India for failure to recognise at a sufficiently early date, "the need for a system of planned movement of food-grains including rice as well as wheat from surplus to deficit provinces and states. In other words, the basic plan should have come into operation much earlier than it did", it said.

"The report only confirms what has been suspected all along", wrote The Hindu, "that the famine in Bengal which took a toll of nearly two million lives and has fearfully weakened the physique and morale of the vast bulk of the surviving population was largely a man-made famine. It seems to us that the Government of India comes out of the pages of the report even more tarnished than the Provincial Government. While the Bengal Government was mainly responsible for the failure to control prices which was 'the second basic cause of the famine', the Government of India by its bungling made it practically impossible for succour to reach the province from outside".

# On the Threshold of Freedom

43

ON JUNE 14, 1945, Lord Wavell announced the British Government's proposal to invite leaders of political parties to join the Viceroy's Executive Council which would be completely Indianised with the exception of Defence. He said there would be four Hindus, four Muslims and representation for other interests. The tasks of the new Government would be (1) to prosecute the war against Japan with the utmost energy; (2) to carry on the Government of British India with all the manifold task of post-war development in front of it until a new permanent constitution could be agreed upon and come into force and (3) to consider when the members of the Council thought it possible the means by which such agreement could be achieved. The Viceroy invited 21 leaders of the Congress, the Muslim League, the depressed classes, the Sikhs and Europeans to meet him in Simla.

In pursuance of the Wavell plan the Congress leaders in detention at Ahmednagar were released. The Hindu after pointing out that what the plan conceded was inadequate especially in the matter of defence said: "Inadequate as the Government's proposals are, it seems to us that in the best interests of the country, the Congress and the League should take the Government at their word and make an earnest attempt to work the plan in such a way as to usher in real and complete freedom for the country at the earliest possible moment. Frankly, we do not see what the alternative is".

On the eve of the Simla conference, The Hindu wrote: "A heavy responsibility rests on all the invitees to make the conference a success and thus deliver the country from the feeling of frustration which saps all worthwhile activity. Neither a defeatist nor a merely negative approach will suffice. We have every hope that the conference will enter upon its difficult task with a resolve to accommodate all reasonable points of view and to fill in the details in such a way as to produce a workmanlike Government which would rapidly take the country to the goal of complete freedom".

The Simla conference adjourned on June 29 till July 14 after the Congress and the League failed to agree on the procedure for suggesting names to the Executive Council and the various parties represented at the conference were asked to submit their names to the Viceroy who would choose from the list. Reviewing the conference, The Hindu said the adjournment of the conference "should not blind us to the fact that solid gains have been achieved. Broad

agreement has been reached between the principal Indian parties on the one hand and the Viceroy on the other on the general principle of the plan for an interim Government. That suggests that the vital details which were omitted in the published scheme have been filled to the satisfaction of the progressive political elements represented by these parties and that they are convinced that if the scheme is put through not only will the deadlock be broken but the way will be made smooth for all who must co-operate in the much larger task of framing an agreed constitution for a free India." Referring to the hitch brought about by the insistence of the League that it should have the exclusive right to nominate the Muslim members of the Council, The Hindu pointed out the League's claim had been vigorously disputed not merely by non-Muslims but by many Muslim organisations as well and added in any case that was not the issue at the moment "It may have to be faced and answered when the time for a permanent settlement comes. If the League should insist on this claim being accepted here and now it could only mean that it wishes to get the other parties to the conference to commit themselves to a position which actually prejudices the future, while the League has all along refused to commit itself in the same way . . . We trust it is still not too late for the Congress and the League to come to an agreement which would obviate the need for the Viceroy exercising a right of choice which is properly theirs and which they may not relinquish without prejudicing the interests of India. At the same time every Muslim who loves his country should tell Mr. Jinnah and the League that they must not think of getting out of the difficulty by the easy and fatal shortcut of abstention"

As the Congress Working Committee met at Simla and discussed the panel of names for the Executive Council to be submitted to the Viceroy, the Special Correspondent of *The Hindu* wrote: "An air of optimism prevails in Congress circles about the outcome of the conference. Talks with two prominent members of the Working Committee show that Congress leaders do not doubt that the present proposals made by the British Government were really born out of a genuine desire to end the deadlock. Congress leaders feel that the present proposals open out opportunities for working out a basis for convening a Constituent Assembly in the not too distant future for drafting the future constitution of India. There is no inclination to believe that no settlement is possible without the co-operation of the League. It is urged that the League President must realise before it is too late that the British Government are really anxious to settle the Indian problem and that they have no longer any use for parties or individuals who would obstruct such a settlement. There is reason to believe that a number of League leaders other than Mr. Jinnah understand Britain's changed view and realise the need for coming to an agreement with the Congress"

On July 7, the Congress President, Maulana Azad announced that the Congress had submitted a panel of 15 names to the Viceroy. He said the first consideration before the Working Committee was to select men of ability, secondly the Committee was guided by a desire not to confine the selection to party limits. Able persons outside the Congress had also been included. The third principle adopted was to include representatives of as many minorities as possible.

The Muslim League insisted it should be considered as the sole representative of the Muslims or in the alternative Mr. Jinnah must be given the exclusive



right to nominate Muslim members of the Executive Council irrespective of their party affiliation. The Simla Correspondent reported on July 10 that this demand had been rejected by the Viceroy "who is concerned with safeguarding the rights of the Muslim community as a whole and not the prestige and influence of the Muslim League which is one of the many Muslim organisations in the country".

Reporting Mr. Jinnah's interview with the Viceroy on July 11, the Correspondent said "It is presumed that Mr. Jinnah reiterated his demand to nominate all Muslim candidates to the Executive Council and that the Viceroy finally expressed his inability to agree to the demand. Mr. Jinnah's refusal to submit his panel of names, is undoubtedly a desperate attempt at ascertaining where exactly the League stands in relation to Britain".

The Correspondent reported a dramatic reversal of the situation on July 12 after Maulana Azad's interview with the Viceroy. He said during the interview "Azad was informed that in view of the Muslim League's attitude it was impossible to form an agreed Executive Council and that therefore no useful purpose would be served by continuing the conference procedure for resolving the deadlock. Opinion is unanimous that the conference will be dissolved on July 14 when it reassembles to hear the Viceroy's statement on the position". It happened as the Correspondent predicted. It was officially announced on July 14 that the Simla conference had failed.

The Hindu blamed the Muslim League's "unbending and persistently negative attitude" for the breakdown of the negotiations "which started under the most favourable auspices. That the Congress, on the contrary, had adopted a most conciliatory and constructive attitude throughout has been testified to even by those who have all along been hostile to it". The Hindu said "What surprises us is that the Viceroy who must have had an inkling of Mr. Jinnah's mind should nevertheless have in adjourning the conference on June 29 followed a course of action which strongly suggested that he would not be disposed to allow any party to adopt a purely obstructive attitude, only to give in at the last moment to Mr. Jinnah's obstinate opposition. . . If as has been stated Lord Wavell did draw up his own list and showed it to Mr. Jinnah who would not accept it, why did he not show the list to the Congress President as one would have expected him to especially after the latter had submitted his own list? And with the result that once again Mr. Jinnah has been allowed to obstruct a settlement though he has always acted on the view that it is no part of his business to put forward alternative proposals as a basis for discussion or to undertake that he would agree to any settlement which had the backing of the bulk of public opinion. . . The matter clearly cannot be left where it stands. Mr. Jinnah's latest demand on the face of it is preposterous. He will agree to an interim Government only if the principle of Pakistan is accepted without further ado and the League was 'accorded equality of representation with all other parties in the new Government' or in other words the League is made the ruler of India — of course with Britain's support. The British Government has a clear duty to impress it on the League that it will not be allowed to hold up progress in India".

Reviewing the Simla conference from the point of view of the journalists who covered it, The Hindu Correspondent wrote on July 15: "Pressmen who were in full strength in Simla not only from all over India but from foreign countries

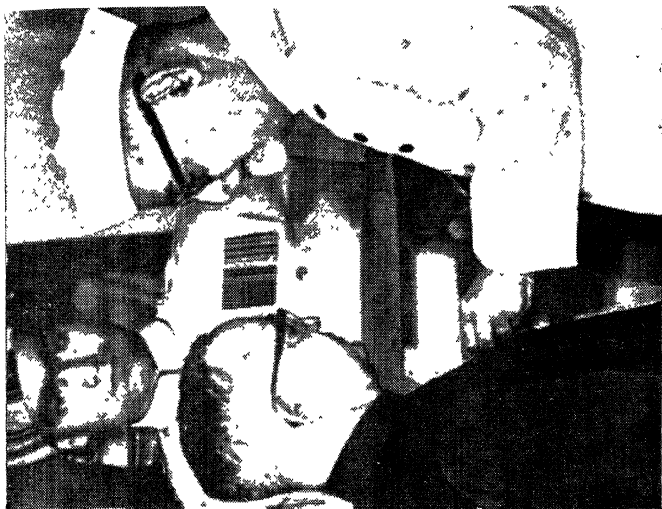
also are taking with them happy memories of the days spent in Simla, hunting and scouring for news from quarters which at any rate this time were not very helpful. Everyone appeared to be "dumb" and mystery surrounded every face and even number one news-takers and expert readers of faces failed in a manner in which they have never failed before. The faces of leaders as they came out either from the Viceroy's House or Manor Ville or Cecil Hotel (where party leaders were lodged) were most deceptive. Some of them appeared to have learnt the special art of assuming a smile or a frown either to conceal what really was in their minds or in some cases to frighten away journalists who had often to wait for hours together in rain and foggy weather. Senior Pressmen were often heard remarking in disgust that their patience had never been so sorely taxed."

The Hindu commented: "A good news-hawk, however, is never beaten and night and day the messages kept flowing in till the final debacle. Then the reporter's toil was ended and it was now the sub-editor who had to find room in these days of paper shortage for the deluge of explanation and comment by everyone from the highest in the land to the minor busy bodies who will issue statements on the slightest provocation. But the Press does not regret or avoid technical crises, these are the high spots of its existence and there are few newspapers who would care to miss the opportunity of displaying in large type and fancy headlines the latest news from Simla".

But Indian Pressmen were worried not only by the deceptive faces at Simla which denied them news but also by the practice of top Indian leaders favouring foreign correspondents, for exclusive interviews. So one day during the Simla conference Indian Correspondents converged on Jawaharlal Nehru who spent 45 minutes with them trying to pacify them. The questions they asked him were: "Why do Nehru and Gandhiji give more interviews to foreign journalists than to Indians? Is it because of an inferiority complex?" The issue had become more insistent because one particular foreign journalist, Preston Grover (of the Associated Press of America) was able to secure exclusive interviews with Gandhiji more than once and with Azad and Nehru not to speak of Jinnah (all of which The Hindu featured in its columns) on the Wavell Plan. While admitting that sometimes it would so happen that foreign correspondents got exclusive interviews from Gandhiji or from himself, Pandit Nehru refuted strongly (the Simla Correspondent wrote) the charge of what he described as "inferiority complex". He maintained that it was untrue to say that either of them had inferiority complex for a white skin and there was no ground for the charge which had been made against them in the Indian Press. The journalists, intervening, said that there was no question of any attack either against Gandhiji or himself though they held that foreign journalists had a much easier approach to them and got exclusive interviews more easily from them. Pandit Nehru said if there was any substance in that suggestion there were certain special circumstances responsible for such things. There were very few men in the political life of India, who could be counted on one's fingers, who were known outside India to the rest of the world. Naturally, therefore the outside world wanted to know their views on serious matters concerning India and he had no hesitation in saying that those few leaders also wanted publicity for India in the foreign Press and therefore whenever they were offered an opportunity to do so they welcomed it

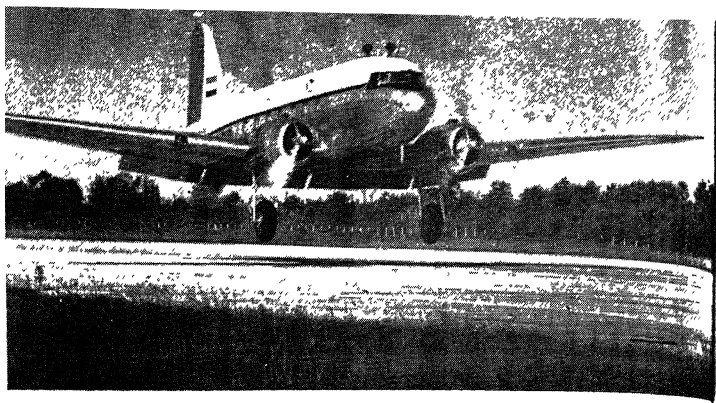
(Right) The Hindu after it became a daily in 1889.



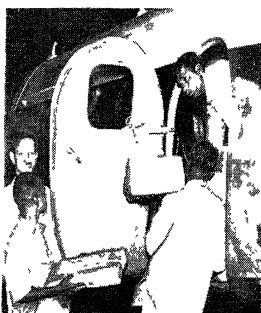


(Left) Kasturi Srinivasan, Editor of The Hindu, being decorated with the insignia of Padma Bhushan by President Rajendra Prasad in 1956. (Right) A similar honour came to G. Narasimhan, Managing Editor who is seen being invested with Padma Bhushan by President Zakir Husain in 1968.





**Airlift of The Hindu** The Hindu Dakota leaving the airport in February 1964 carrying copies of The Hindu for distribution in the southern region. (Right) Paper parcels being loaded in the plane. (Below) The first type of aircraft which inaugurated the airlift of The Hindu in September, 1963 was a Heron, here seen airborne.





Diamond Drivers



THE



HINDU

Vol 101 No 104

India's National Newspaper

HYDERABAD  
THURSDAYTHE SOUTH INDIAN EXPORT  
CO. PVT. LTD.

CENTENARY YEAR 1977-78

Cabinet Crisis in Maharashtra

## Four Congress Ministers Quit Coalition Govt.

BOMBAY July 12 (UPI)—Four Congress (U) Ministers in Maharashtra have resigned today as two Ministers and two Ministers of State all but withdrew from the coalition government. The four Ministers said their party and wish have a role in the government.

The four Ministers who resigned were: Dr. B. K. Chaudhari, Minister for Industries; Dr. B. K. Chaudhari, Minister for Industries; Dr. B. K. Chaudhari, Minister for Industries; Dr. B. K. Chaudhari, Minister for Industries.

### CWC Directors to CM

BOMBAY July 12 (UPI)—The Central Water Commission (CWC) directors have met the Chief Minister of Maharashtra today to discuss the commission's plans for the development of water resources in the state.

### Unsettled

The situation in Maharashtra remains unsettled as the coalition government continues to face challenges from various political parties.

### No Doubts About Vizag Steel Plant

There are no doubts about the future of the Vizag Steel Plant as the government has decided to proceed with the project.

### Pay raises on for Govt Staff

Pay raises have been approved for government staff across the state, including those in Maharashtra.

### Good Rainfall in Mercara

Good rainfall has been recorded in the Mercara region, which is a relief for the farmers.

### Anti-Demotion Bill in Congress Session

The Anti-Demotion Bill is expected to be discussed in the next session of the Congress.

## "Discriminatory Attitude" by Centre Alleged

The Centre is alleged to have a discriminatory attitude towards the states, particularly in the case of Maharashtra.

## Policy on Take-over of Industries Soon

The government is expected to announce a policy on the take-over of industries soon.

## Furore in Maharashtra Assembly

A furore broke out in the Maharashtra Assembly today over the resignation of the four Ministers.

## Co-op Malpractices 12 Cases Filed

Twelve cases of malpractices in co-operative societies have been filed in the court.

## Vimadadi Panel Strung

The Vimadadi Panel has been strung, which is a setback for the project.

## Charan Singh Withdraws Resignation

Charan Singh has withdrawn his resignation from the government.

## Release of Uranium for Tarapur

The release of uranium for the Tarapur nuclear reactor has been approved.

## Janata Wins Two Council Seats

The Janata Party has won two seats in the local council elections.

## Hydrobad Weather

The weather in Hyderabad is expected to be a hydrobad one.

## Cast in the mould of CISCO tradition

The new CISCO Castings are cast in the mould of the CISCO tradition.



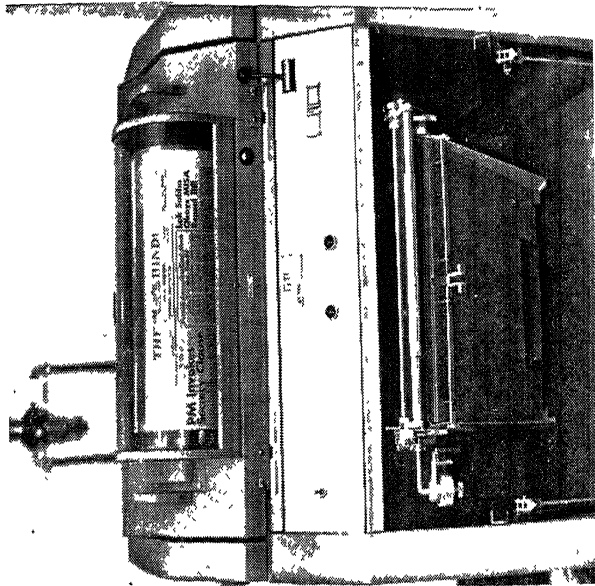
**CISCO Castings**  
The Crescent Iron & Steel Corpn Ltd.  
Factory: Saravali Road, Bangalore (2nd).  
Phone: 462861 & 462862.  
Banks: 462861 & 462862.



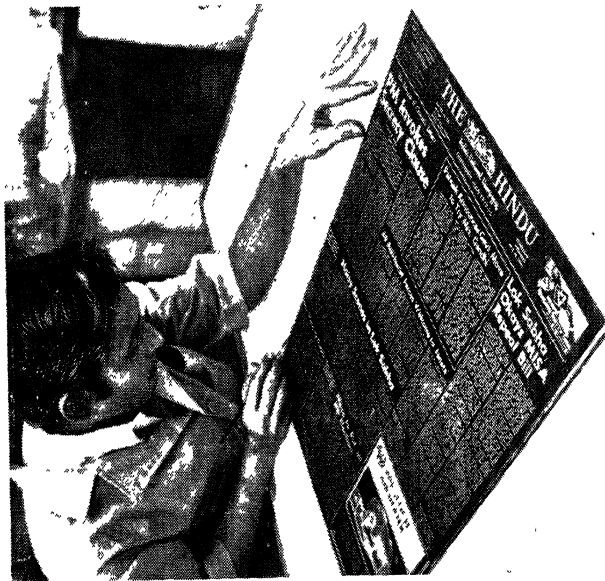


100, Mount Road, the first known home of The Hindu and its National Press. (*Below*) Kasturi Buildings, the present premises of The Hindu which was occupied in 1939.





Facsimile transmission The finished proof of the front page of THE HINDU located in the transmitter for transmission (Right) The same page, received as negative at the other end, is being prepared for further processing.



Pandit Nehru pointed out that whereas Indian journalists were interested in day-to-day politics of the country, foreign journalists were interested in different problems concerning India. Whenever they met him or Gandhiji, or any other Indian political leader they generally asked questions in which Indian journalists were not so much interested because they knew the opinions of Indian leaders on those subjects. He could not say that neither he nor Gandhiji had refused interviews on such subjects to any Indian journalist who approached them. However there was one circumstance which went in favour of foreign correspondents and that was that they often came to India with letters from their friends abroad – friends who were friends and sympathisers of India also. Naturally, therefore, they had to welcome such correspondents.

Towards the end of July, 1945 the Labour Party won the general elections defeating Churchill and his party. Among the defeated ministers was L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India. The Hindu said: "Progressives all over the world would share Mr. Attlee's remark, 'This is truly a very remarkable and gratifying result'; for to say the least the mere defeat of reaction in the citadel of imperialism is a great gain to the cause of democracy everywhere". The Hindu said the outside world would judge Labour "by its treatment of subject peoples. There are many dark spots in the empire where racial domination is rampant, many slums of human squalor and misery, large territories where self-government is denied. Unless Labour proceeds on the basis that freedom is indivisible and that it must be granted at once to all peoples, it cannot realise its primary aim of ensuring world peace and prosperity". There was, however, no specific reference in the editorial to Labour's policy towards India or to Amery's defeat at the hands of a Labour candidate.

The Wardha Correspondent wrote that while the sweeping victory of Labour was welcomed in Congress circles, Congress leaders including Gandhiji, would prefer to judge the new Labour Government by what it would do for India, whether it would make a clean sweep of the past and adopt a bold and progressive policy towards India or it would be content to magnify and harp on differences among political parties in India as a justification for continuing the policy as before.

The Hindu on August 1 appealed to the new Labour Government to take the initiative in India and direct the Viceroy to release political prisoners and restore popular Governments in the provinces. "Let the Labour Government do this and ask Lord Wavell to take up once again the thread that was snapped at Simla; that would be a signal service to the British and Indian peoples alike".

As India was waiting for the new Labour Government to make a move on India, the country was stunned and horrified by the news that the Americans had dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima and followed it up with another on Nagasaki. The Hindu said: "The Americans have now added to the long list of weapons of destruction the atom bomb... It would be appalling if the Japanese people are to be blown to pieces in thousands because of the stupidity of their rulers".

A professor of the Madras Christian College, Tambaram, Rev. T. G. Platten, expressed horror at the dropping of the atom bomb on Japanese cities. In a letter to the Editor he wrote "Amid the reports coming from Europe and America of the awe caused by the atomic bomb one has looked in vain so far for an expression of shame at the actual use by the Allies of such a weapon.

There must however be many ordinary Britishers and Americans who have felt such a reaction and would like to join in a public protest against any further employment of the weapon"

The Hindu carried an exclusive interview with Sir C V Raman, the scientist, on the potentialities of the atom bomb Sir C V Raman said "Once it is realised that power can be generated from the disintegration of atomic nuclei the next step is to harness the same for practical needs If the energy is released in stages distributed over a longer period and not all at once and concentrated as in the case of the atomic bomb, it can be used for generating electricity and put to constructive purpose"

The Japanese, however, did not wait for a third atom bomb, they offered to surrender on August 12, 1945 and the actual news of surrender on August 15 was a national scoop for The Hindu which had an efficient system of monitoring of radio bulletins In the early hours of the morning of August 15, a sub-editor tuned in to the B. B. C for the 4.30 a m news bulletin He had almost finished his shift and this was a routine check-up The first edition of the paper had been put to bed. As the Sub glued his ears to the radio receiver he suddenly became alert for he heard the announcer say that the British Prime Minister, Mr Attlee, had officially announced that the Japanese had surrendered The news was rushed and carried in the later editions of the paper Says the biographer of Kasturi Srinivasan "Srinivasan happened to be in Bombay at the time and when he opened his copy of The Hindu there he was overjoyed to see that his paper carried the official story of the surrender while the Bombay morning papers had missed it Meeting Sir Francis Low, Editor of the Times of India, later that day, Srinivasan with childlike glee waved his paper before him and said. 'See what you have missed: '"

The Hindu said the Japanese surrender was "welcome news to a long suffering world which has been watching with dismay and horror the perfection of the instruments of man's destruction which can only end in the utter annihilation of modern civilisation. Whether it was the terrible atom bomb or the entry of Russia, a colossus, that forced Japan's hands it is not necessary to enquire Certainly it was a combination of these two factors, closely followed each other as they did, that brought home to the Japanese the utter helplessness of their position".

The Hindu declared a holiday to mark the end of World War II and on the previous morning published a 11-page feature on the Japanese war with two pages of pictures

The Japanese surrender was closely followed by the Labour Government's summons on August 21 to Lord Wavell to return home for consultations That the new Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, was an ardent reader of The Hindu was disclosed by Shiva Rao who attended one of his press conferences in London "He (Lord Pethick-Lawrence) had of course read The Hindu," Shiva Rao wrote, "while on a visit to Madras and since taking charge of the India Office had extracts from The Hindu sent to him"

The new Labour Government's plan for India was announced by Lord Wavell on his return from London on September 19, 1945. He said the Government would convene a constitution-making body soon after the elections to the provincial legislatures and that for the interim period steps would be taken

after the election to the Central Assembly to bring into the Executive Council representatives of the main political parties

The Hindu criticised the delay involved in implementing the proposals and asked what prevented the Viceroy from implementing the Simla conference proposals regarding the Executive Council "Though the Simla talks broke down because of the intransigence of the League, what was there to prevent the Viceroy from forming a new Executive Council with the help of all parties who would co-operate? If Lord Wavell is prepared not to risk Mr Jinnah's displeasure what guarantee is there that when the provincial elections are over Mr. Jinnah and the League will not be allowed to block the formation of a popular Government at the centre? The British Government will still have to grasp the nettle and if it fails to do that firmly, as it failed when the Simla talks were on, Lord Wavell's brave words, 'we are well aware of the difficulties to be overcome but are determined to overcome them', will prove a hollow mockery"

Writing in a lighter vein on a sentence occurring in Wavell's broadcast The Hindu said. "Unlike the average run of state papers which are apt to repel the student of words, this short document contains a sentence which will vastly intrigue the inquisitive person H M's Government, said the Viceroy, 'have as you can well imagine a great number of important problems on their hands; but despite their preoccupations they have *taken time* almost in their first days of office to give attention to the Indian problem as one of the first and most important'. The words we have italicised would seem to constitute a piece of verbal confusion for which the old fashioned irate dominic would have rapped you over the knuckles. No less an authority than the shorter Oxford English Dictionary explains the phrase 'to take (one's) time' as meaning 'to allow oneself ample time to do something'. Indeed it goes on to declare that there is a sarcastic intent in the phrase, that it really means, 'to be quite long enough', that is too long; to loiter – which is in fact the very reverse of what Lord Wavell meant to affirm Harassed journalists caught in the act might cry meaculpa and plead that 'taken time' was an obvious and unmistakable slip of the pen for "found time" But where exalted personages are involved we should remember the old Sanskrit poet's sage observation that when the great ones speak the meaning leaps (or may be limps) after the word and not the other way round. We have no doubt that Lord Wavell was being profoundly if unconsciously accurate The new Labour Government has indeed "taken time, with a vengeance, to give attention to the Indian problem".

Low had a cartoon on the Indian situation which The Hindu carried on October 9. Under the caption the "Indian outlook", the cartoon showed Wavell viewing the landscape through a telescope and he finds Jinnah obstructing the view.

Jinnah was indeed obstructing the view In an interview to a foreign pressman reproduced in The Hindu Jinnah visualised his scheme of Pakistan would consist of all the North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sind and Punjab in the North West and on the eastern side Bengal (including Calcutta city) and Assam provinces He said Pakistan would embrace a population of 100 millions and it would be a democracy with the major industries and public utility services socialised. He said he did not expect Pakistan would have an opposition party.

It is relevant to record here that speaking to the same foreign pressman in Bombay earlier Jawaharlal Nehru spoke of the strength of the Muslim League in areas where the Muslims were in a minority and its weakness where they were in a majority. He said "The League always seemed strongest where the Muslim minority was the smallest Where the Muslim population was nearly equal to the Hindu population or exceeded it such as in the North-West Frontier Province there the League was least strong"

It is also interesting to record here what a British Governor of the Punjab, Sir Bertrand Glancy thought of Jinnah. In his monthly report of the situation in his province to the Viceroy, Sir Bertrand said this of Jinnah "He might make an ideal leader of a demolition squad".

The trial of three Indian National Army (formed by Netaji Subhas Bose) officers for treason at the Red Fort began on November 5, 1945 and sparked off widespread disturbances. Trouble flared up in Calcutta on November 22 when police opened fire on a number of occasions on demonstrators protesting against the I N A. trial. Trouble continued the next day with more police firings and more casualties. There were also disturbances in Bombay where students formed the vanguard.

On February 18, 1946 it was reported from New Delhi that all ratings in H. M. I. S. Talwar, the communication training establishment in Bombay with the exception of the higher ratings, had refused to do duty. The strikers, who numbered 1000, demanded same pay and allowances as given to ratings of the Royal Navy and other concessions enjoyed by them. The Hindu published the news in an inconspicuous place in the middle of the page with two headings: "Naval ratings on strike. Better conditions demanded". On February 19, striking ratings numbering 3000 organised a demonstration in the Flora Fountain area of Bombay and caused wild confusion and complete hold-up of traffic. Some British army officers and troops were also attacked. It was stated the strike had spread to other shore establishments from H. M. I. S. Talwar. Some of the naval lorries which went round the city asking the strikers to observe discipline and non-violence bore the letters, "I N N." (Indian National Navy). The Congress tri-colour flag was seen flying on the bonnets of some of the lorries. In the harbour almost all the ships of the R. I. N. numbering about 24 were practically unmanned. The Congress flag fluttered on the bows of H. M. I. S. Lahore and a motor minesweeper.

The trouble continued in the next few days. Rebel ratings tried to storm a naval armoury and there was exchange of gun fire. Royal Indian Air Force personnel at Andheri and Marine Drive joined the ratings' strike in sympathy. Naval ratings in other parts of the country also went on strike and there were demonstrations in Karachi, Calcutta, Madras and New Delhi.

On February 22, a six-hour "battle" between Indian ratings and British troops ended after all the R. I. N. ships in the hands of the "mutineers" had signalled cease-fire. But the sit-down strike by the ratings continued. Disturbances broke out in Bombay on the same day following a call for a hartal by communist and other organisations. Police opened fire many times and British troops were called out. There were heavy casualties.

All the R. I. N. ships under the control of rebel ratings surrendered on February 24 and the strike was called off on the advice of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Commenting on the strike and its sequel, *The Hindu* said any approach

to the problems concerning the Indian fighting services must transcend the narrow confines of the military code to be of any use in solving them. The strikes in the R I A F. and the Navy, The Hindu said "are in fact a dim reflection of a new awareness on the part of the Indian personnel and an attempt to solve the conflict between two loyalties. There is evidence and they themselves proclaim it that all the camaraderie of war and the facing of danger in common has not served to obliterate distinctions of race and colour. Unfortunately, this feeling has been aggravated not only by unfavourable contrasts between Indian and British in the matter of pay and living conditions but also by the Blimpish behaviour of British officers"

While the disturbances were going on in the port towns of India, there was another development in the political field. It was announced in London on February 19, 1946, that a Cabinet Mission consisting of the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A. V. Alexander would visit India towards the end of March to discuss with Indian leaders the framing of a constitution. The Hindu felt the announcement betokened "a welcome realisation of the urgency of an Indian settlement". The prime requisite for the success of the mission, it added, "will be readiness in action on the part of the British Government to implement the reiterated pledge of full independence. The Government's declaration eschews the use of the word, Independence, which is a small thing in itself perhaps, but much will depend on the contents of the treaty between Britain and India"

The British Premier, Attlee, followed up his previous declaration with another on March 17 when he said it was the desire of the Government to establish an interim Government in India. While the details of the new Government were being worked out, Attlee made it clear, that the minorities would not be allowed to veto the advance of the majority. The Hindu praised Attlee for defining the purpose of the Cabinet Mission and making it clear that no difficulties would be allowed to stand "in the way of India exercising that freedom which Britain has long promised her". The Hindu advised the minorities that they should "realise that the facile expedient of holding up action by appealing to the British Government over the head of the constitution-making body cannot produce an agreed constitution. For just that reason Mr. Attlee has unequivocally declared: 'we are mindful of the rights of minorities and the minorities should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand, we cannot allow a minority to place a veto on the advance of a majority'. India's political unity is a fact. Britain has largely been responsible for building up this unity and Britishers of all parties are duly proud of this achievement. It would therefore be odd if their last act in India were to be an attempt to disrupt that unity. Their responsibility would be ended with the transfer of the Government of India to Indian hands as a going concern, leaving it to Indians themselves to settle as to how that Government is to be run in the future".

As the Cabinet Mission arrived in Delhi on March 24, The Hindu wrote: "The Cabinet Mission begin their undoubtedly arduous task with advantages which few of their predecessors have had. As we have said there is all round feeling of goodwill and even a certain prayerfulness of mood. There is among the members of the mission one at least who has had an unrivalled opportunity to know at close quarters the inwardness of the national urge beneath the

troubled surface. In Sir Stafford Cripps the mission possesses one who has had some experience of the pitfalls that beset the path. It is to be hoped that he will use it to crown his second effort with success."

Giving a pen picture of the Cabinet Mission, C. R. Srinivasan, Editor of the *Swadeshamitran*, wrote in *The Hindu*: "Delhi at the moment is a whispering gallery. Every word and gesture of the Cabinet delegation is faithfully recorded and fancifully interpreted. Wherever you go, whosoever you meet the question anxiously canvassed is whether the delegation mean business this time. An air of suspense overhangs all talks, for there is little yet one can fasten on. Sorting out impressions derived secondhand is an unprofitable task in the circumstances. But it is clear that the delegation has not shown its hand yet and is more concerned to receive impressions of the pattern of politics in the country. Such talks as have materialised so far are of the unilateral type where the visitor does most of the talking and gets little in exchange. There is therefore more wishful thinking and the stories going round the city are not to be taken at face value."

C. R. S. gave these thumb-nail sketches of the members of the Cabinet Mission:

**Pethick-Lawrence**: He struck me as a man with a mind of his own, capable of taking decisions, and fighting for his views; and his views such as they are on other matters are broad-based on fundamental values. As a politician, of course, he knows the value of compromise but I do not think he is of the opportunist type, which will compromise on essentials. A settlement can only endure if it is just. What is just can only be arrived at by sorting out ephemeral and enduring values. Pethick-Lawrence struck me as quite competent to do that. He is earnest and keyed with the zeal to succeed. He is conscious he has undertaken a task holding many facets and multiple problems and quite frankly, he says he cannot go back with his task unfinished or ill-finished.

**Cripps**: What struck me more than the alertness of his mind was its agility. It turned and twisted as it suggested all things to all men, while the spoken word carried a note of caution not to read too much into what he said. He imports an air of engaging frankness in his private talks and provides a corrective to the impression of a hard-boiled politician that his public talks suggest. He has a reputation to redeem in this country and with the backing of a Government now to be depended on at home, I believe there is good chance of redemption.

**A. V. Alexander**: The intriguing figure in the trio is A. V. Alexander. He is a difficult man to place in the context of Indian politics. A short stocky man with the pimple on the nose he drew attention to, not so much to be noticed, with a merry twinkle in the eye, revealing to the discerning unsuspected depths of humour. He proved himself a man who had a great deal to say for himself when he was drawn out."

During the discussion which the Cabinet Mission had in Delhi, *The Hindu* published reports daily of Congress leaders' views on Pakistan. First Maulana Azad and then Sardar Patel said the Congress would never agree to Pakistan "come what may". And then to their list was added that of Nehru who said at a press conference in Delhi on April 5: "The Congress is not going to agree to the League demand of Pakistan under any circumstances whatsoever — even if the British Government agrees to it. It is not a question of Congress



agreeing or not I know something of the Indian people. If the Congress agrees to the demand even then it will not come off. Nothing on earth, not even the U.N.O. is going to bring about the Pakistan that Mr. Jinnah wants. Large areas which Mr. Jinnah claims as Pakistan are so fundamentally and determinedly opposed to Pakistan that you cannot compel them whatever the Muslim League or others intend to do in the matter."

The United Press of India quoted Gandhiji as having told the Cabinet Mission "Pakistan which connotes the division of India will be a sin" and "the two-nation theory propounded by Mr. Jinnah is absurd."

According to a resolution passed by the Muslim League Legislators' convention in Delhi on April 8 it was demanded that the zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the north-east, and the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan in the North-West of India, "where the Muslims are a dominant majority be constituted into a sovereign independent state and that an unequivocal undertaking be given to implement the establishment of Pakistan without delay."

As the Cabinet Mission was having its final round of talks before adjourning for a short recess speculation was rife on the nature of their proposals. The Delhi Correspondent wrote: "There is no indication as to the nature of the suggestion which the British Mission will put forward. How well that secret has been kept and how skilfully the exploratory talks have been conducted by the Mission will be evident from the fact that there is subdued optimism in both the Congress and League camps. The Congress leaders are confident that their plan for a united India, one Federation, one centre with the fullest autonomy for the units and a single Constituent Assembly will be endorsed because it is not only based on justice and fairplay, but it is the best measure for laying the foundation for a strong and united and prosperous India. On the other hand, League quarters feel that their demand will be met to a considerable extent and they think that the Mission will concede the substance of Pakistan by agreeing to have two Federations joined together in a confederated centre. They base their hope on the claim that their success in the recent provincial elections have generally shown that the policy of division has the support of a great majority of the Muslim community."

The Hindu on April 25, 1946, carried a Low cartoon titled, "Uneasy sitting in India". The cartoon showed the three Cabinet Ministers with their chests bare sitting on a bed of nails, while two pressmen (one with a camera) marked U. S. A. and U. S. S. R., watch and two loud-speakers blare out the slogan "Pakistan or fight" and "No Pakistan or fight". "The Responsible Three" are quoted as telling the pressmen: "May be you'd care to try it yourselves when you have finished shooting off your big mouths".

During the Cabinet Mission's talks in Delhi and Simla, The Hindu carried articles by H. N. Brailsford who was in India covering the Cabinet Mission for the British press. On the eve of the tripartite talks in Simla on May 5, Brailsford wrote, "The British Cabinet Mission has scored a decisive success. It has brought the two leading Indian parties into conference under its guidance to shape the future of their common country. The long years of deadlock are ended. Throughout a generation it was Tory policy to keep these two apart, today it is a Labour Government that has brought them together. With infinite patience the three Ministers talked with the League and the Congress

separately, probing, questioning, emphasising points of agreement and minimising differences until at last there emerged a basis of discussion. The thing was possible only because both sides realised at last that British rule over India has had its day and that Independence is within their grasp. It is too early to assume that the goal has been won but in the balance the omens are hopeful. For long it seemed doubtful whether the Muslim League really wished for a settlement. Its consent to meet the Congress without exacting an unconditional surrender is a long step – towards reason and conciliation. Secondly, though neither side likes the suggested solution both have accepted it as a basis of discussion. That is an immense advance. The Muslims no longer refuse to recognise some form of Indian unity; Congress within that framework will concede some form of Pakistan. I wish I could report that public opinion is hopeful and confident. So far as I can gauge it, it is anxious and bewildered. The fear of disorder haunts it and it expects a long and difficult debate at Simla. The Congress made a grave mistake when it chose two Muslims though both are men of character and distinction to sit on its delegation of four. In this selection the League will see a challenge."

Describing the opening of the Tripartite conference in Simla on May 5, 1946, The Hindu Correspondent wrote "All roads in Simla led to the Viceroy's House this morning. The weather was bright, the sun shining gloriously over pine-clad Simla. There was considerable activity since daybreak. After an early breakfast everybody hurried to the main gates of the Viceroy's House, to catch a glimpse of the leaders proceeding to attend the Tripartite conference. The Congress members assembled at "The Retreat", Maulana Azad's residence at 9 o'clock. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Abdul Ghaffar Khan walked right along the main road to Viceroy's House. The Congress President drove in a rickshaw decorated with a tricolour flag. The Congress leaders were lustily cheered by the public who lined the route. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru wore a chocolate coloured sherwani, white churidhar, and white khaddar cap. He carried a Simla walking stick in his hand. By his side walked the tall, dignified Frontier leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The 70-year old Sardar Patel, attired in spotless white Khadi walked briskly carrying a yellow file in his hand. At the Viceregal Lodge the three British Ministers and their secretaries appeared at the steps of the main entrance punctually at a quarter to ten. Maulana Azad was the earliest to arrive. He drove straight to the portico where the Cabinet Ministers came down the steps to receive him. Maulana Azad greeted them in English as he alighted from the rickshaw. Lord Pethick-Lawrence was the first to shake hands with him very warmly. The other members, Sir S. Cripps and Mr. A. V. Alexander came forward next to greet the Congress President. The group was then photographed after which the Secretary of State led the way to the conference room. Five minutes later, Pandit Nehru, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Sardar Patel also reached the Viceregal Lodge walking, when Sir S. Cripps and Mr. A. V. Alexander came once again to the portico to receive them. They exchanged greetings and chatted pleasantly for a few minutes before they went in. The Congress delegates took their seats at the conference table by five minutes to ten.

"At the stroke of ten, the four Muslim League delegates, Mr. Jinnah, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawab Mahomed Ismail and Mr. Abdul Rab Nishtar drove into the Viceregal Lodge in a military staff car. The Muslim delegates

made efforts to keep smiling while sitting for a photograph after which they were conducted into the conference room. The members of the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy sat on one side of the oval table in the middle of the room facing the Indian delegates with the two frontier members on either end. Next to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan sat Sardar Patel, then came Maulana Azad and Mr. Nehru besides whom was sitting Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan followed by Nawab Mahomed Ismail and Mr. Abdul Rab Nishtar so that Mr. Jinnah was facing Sir Stafford Cripps. Mr. Nehru sat opposite the Viceroy and Maulana Azad was facing Mr. A. V. Alexander. The morning session of the conference lasted two hours and ten minutes and at 12.10 p.m. Mr. Jinnah and his party came out first."

Following dramatic developments at the conference in which the question of forming an interim Government suddenly took precedence over the long-term constitutional settlement and the members of the Viceroy's Council placed their resignations in the hands of the Viceroy, The Hindu wrote: "Britain should be prepared to issue a proclamation setting a date for the completion of the transfer of control, set up an interim Government, independent in everything except in name, with the largest possible measure of popular support and constituted in such a way that it will act with vigour and purpose and charge it with the responsibility for devising within a stipulated time the appropriate machinery for determining the country's constitutional future."

On May 11, the Simla Correspondent reported. "The formation of an interim Government is imminent, the latest proposal being a council of 12 members, five Hindus, five Muslims and two representing other minorities".

The same day the correspondent stated that the meeting between Nehru and Jinnah had not been successful in bringing the Congress and the League together on the basis of the proposals formulated by the Cabinet Mission. "Since their arrival in India seven weeks ago", the Correspondent added, "the Cabinet Mission have been making every effort to get the Congress and the League together with the main objective of seeing that the transfer of power takes place smoothly and without much civil commotion. In this they have failed since their proposals have been such as to satisfy neither the Congress nor meet the demands of the League. This afternoon's sitting of the tripartite conference finally disclosed that there is no meeting ground between the two parties. The purpose for which the Simla conference had been called has therefore not been fulfilled and at tomorrow's session of the conference it is expected the Cabinet Mission will report this reading of the situation."

"It is clear from the sequence of events during the last few days that the League's attitude began to stiffen after the Cabinet Mission began to modify their basis of discussion. The main alteration that was made was to provide for a legislature with a Union centre and also give the central authority the right to levy taxation. It is also said that tariff was allotted as a central subject. The Muslim League is opposed not only to the creation of a union legislature but it feels that the grant of power of the purse to the central authority will give complete control to one unit. The second modification made by the Cabinet Mission was the provision that the desire of the provinces should be clearly ascertained in a recognised democratic way before they were classed either with the Hindu or Muslim group of provinces. Under this provision the League probably calculates that the chances of securing accession of all six provinces

that it wants for Pakistan will not be bright. Unfortunately the fate of the Cabinet Mission's proposals is that while they have been rejected as unacceptable by the League, the Congress also considers them as thoroughly unsatisfactory as they do not ensure that unity of India with a strong centre which it desires."

It was announced on May 12 that the Simla talks had failed. To The Hindu this did not come as a surprise for it appeared to it that "at no time in these negotiations had any attempt been made to disentangle principles from the passions and prejudices that too often do duty for them." It added "The best prospect of reaching agreement on a permanent constitution lies in setting up an interim Government which will hold power in commission on behalf of the people of India and set up the appropriate machinery for finding out and implementing their wishes in regard to the future."

A.V.S. columnist was reported as saying in a London message that Jinnah paid a secret visit to Moscow and secured the Soviet Union's support to his action. "Just back from his secret trip to Moscow he is expected to rock the world by announcing that M. Stalin has promised him Soviet financial support for any action he may take in India" the columnist said. In a hilarious note The Hindu said "The 200 and odd gentlemen of the world Press who have been accounting for every minute of existence of every protagonist in the Delhi-Simla drama these six weeks, might be slightly incredulous. But the columnist might triumphantly point out Hitler's "doubles" who enabled the dictator to be at more than one place at the same time and the "stand-in" in Hollywood who takes the place of the heroine in the more perilous and toilsome parts of her role. So that the only question now is which of the two who were in Simla and Moscow at the same time was the original and which the counterfeit presentment. A further and perhaps more important question is, was it Stalin in person or his duplicate who promised Soviet financial support 'for any action he may take'?"

The Cabinet Mission's proposals were publicly released on May 16. They included the formation of an interim Government and in the long term provision for a union with limited subjects and the provinces and states enjoying wide powers. There was also provision for grouping of provinces. The Hindu welcomed the proposals as "constructive in character, progressive in outlook, and animated by a genuine desire to break the deadlock which is largely of Britain's making." The paper noted that the "Mission had made it clear that if it has had to take certain decisions it was because no other way of implementing Britain's undertaking to relinquish control was open to it. It seems to us that this contention is justified. That is not to say that its proposals whether in regard to the future or for the setting up of a constitutional assembly are ideally conceived. But they will serve to break the ice and make a beginning by mobilising the goodwill of all elements in India who while anxious to safeguard their own cultural individuality and just rights do not wish to hinder the progress of the country as a whole."

The Hindu said the Mission "has come to the deliberate conclusion that Pakistan whether in the form in which the League envisaged it or in a modified form will mean gross injustice to large masses of people and will endanger the safety and hinder the progress of India and that it must therefore be rejected". The Hindu added however: "There is genuine ground for apprehension that in the desire to concede the substance of Pakistan, the Mission has unduly

restricted the provenance and authority of the Indian union and thus make the centre less strong than might be consistent with safety and security". Referring to the proposal for grouping of provinces it said "The tentative grouping of the provinces into three groups for which the Cabinet Mission takes responsibility is said to be based on the principle of contiguity but is really a concession to League sentiment. The wisdom of the encouragement given to the provinces to group themselves into powerful virtually unitary states based on religious affinities is questionable".

The consensus of opinion among Congressmen (according to the Delhi Correspondent) was that the proposals on the whole, notwithstanding one or two bad features, were worthy of serious and sincere consideration. "There appears to be general agreement in all camps other than that of the Muslim League that the country cannot afford to reject the proposals at that stage but has to accept them and leave the constituent assembly to shape the new constitution as it desires as these proposals are only recommendatory and not binding. Gandhiji said at his prayer meeting in Delhi that the Cabinet Mission's proposals contained 'the seed to convert this land of sorrow into one without sorrow and suffering'.

Low caricatured Jinnah, with a suitcase marked "Pakistan", missing the bus which was named "New India". The conductor of the bus was Pethick-Lawrence and the caption to the cartoon "Missed the bus".

The Congress Working Committee on May 24 criticised what it considered as objectional features of the plan and declared that in the absence of a full picture of the proposed provisional Government it was unable to give a "final opinion at this stage on the proposals".

The Muslim League Council on June 6, accepted the proposals and agreed to join the constitution-making body but added that the League would keep in view the opportunity and the right of secession of provinces or groups from the union which have been provided in the mission's plan by implication. "The ultimate attitude of the Muslim League", the resolution said, "will depend on the final outcome of the labours of the constitution-making body and on the final shape of the constitution which may emerge from the deliberations of that body jointly and separately in its three sections".

The Hindu disputed the League's claim that the Mission's plan by implication provided an opportunity and a right of secession to provinces and groups and said it was altogether without warrant — "for the essence of right of secession is that it can be exercised unilaterally; whereas the only right granted under the Mission's plan to the provinces is to demand at the end of every 10-year period an opportunity to reconsider the constitution of provinces and groups alike. Such reconsideration can result in change only if there is general agreement among all the component units of the union".

A hitch in negotiations for a provisional Government developed following the Congress refusal to agree to parity between the Congress and the League on the Executive Council. Gandhiji, Azad and Nehru had talks with the Cabinet Mission on this subject. "Whether there will be a change", wrote the Delhi Correspondent, "for the better depends on two factors: either on the League showing a great spirit of accommodation or on the Cabinet Mission producing a new formula. The only element of hope at the present moment is that no party desires a breakdown".

On June 16, the Viceroy announced that following inability of the two major parties to agree on the question of an interim Government he had decided to proceed with the formation of such a Government by issuing invitations to 14 representative Indians (who included leaders of the Congress and the League) to join the Executive Council. He also said the provincial assemblies would proceed with the elections necessary for the setting up of the constitution-making machinery. Among the 14 invited six (including one scheduled caste) belonged to the Congress, five to the League, and one each to Parsis, Sikhs and Indian Christians.

The Hindu appealed to the Congress to shoulder the responsibility afforded to it. "The new Government will be an imperfect coalition", it pointed out, "and in so far as the Viceroy has been responsible for introducing disparate elements from considerations which have little to do with political justice or practical efficiency, he will have a special obligation to keep in check any attempt on the part of these elements to pursue courses that are inconsistent with the main purpose of what has been constituted as a coalition, fortuitous though it may be. But the Congress alone of all parties in the country has the prestige and the implicit confidence of the people that will enable it to convert what is on the face of it an enlarged Executive Council into a Government which will function as a succession Government by seeing to it that the transfer of power from British hands commences from the day on which it is installed".

"Will the Congress leaders accept the Viceroy's offer?" This was the question, according to the Delhi Correspondent, that was most widely asked in Delhi. "Congress circles do not conceal their anxiety that the offer should be accepted. The many imperfections in the scheme for constitution-making and the compromises contained in today's (Viceroy's) statement stand out prominently. There is little enthusiasm for the solution propounded by the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy. Gandhiji, according to those near him, is far from happy. Congress leaders contrast the high hopes roused by Mr. Attlee's original declaration in Parliament last March with the sombre mood in which the present solution has been received. They will think hard perhaps for the next two days. Whether they accept or reject the offer, they will do so with a heavy heart. It is far from easy to accept it with the conviction that at every stage it is the Muslim League which has been placated. Rejection, on the other hand, may have the most serious and far reaching consequences. Either way the decision calls for greatest deliberation".

An agency report from Delhi on June 19 said that the Congress Working Committee had decided to accept both the long-term and short-term proposals of the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy notwithstanding certain undesirable features in the scheme. The Delhi Correspondent wrote, "It is interesting to note that the Viceroy has already begun taking action on some of the points brought to his notice in the course of the discussions of the last few days by Congress leaders. Hereafter the Viceroy will not ordinarily see Secretaries to the Government of India except with the sanction of members of the departments concerned. Nor will he, it is reported, make important speeches whether political or otherwise without those utterances being scrutinised by the Executive Council. These constitute important gains in establishing both the prestige and the authority of the new Government and are in accordance

with the general assurance given by the Cabinet Mission last month in outlining proposals for framing the permanent constitution”

There was a setback in the political situation in Delhi late in June following a controversy over the inclusion of a nationalist Muslim in the Government. Reporting this the Delhi Correspondent said “Interest centred today on the Cripps-Azad talks and the two-hour discussions Sir S. Cripps had with Gandhiji immediately after the meeting of the Congress Working Committee. Maulana Azad also had lengthy discussion with Gandhiji and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, mainly, it is believed, about the inclusion of a Congress Muslim in the interim Government. Sir S. Cripps strenuously worked to persuade the Congress leaders to give up the point, but so far has had no success. There is no doubt that the publication of Mr. Jinnah’s correspondence with the Viceroy this morning has had the effect of hardening the Congress position, which despite Gandhiji’s earnest advocacy, was inclined earlier to attach comparatively minor importance to the inclusion of Congress Muslims in the Executive Council especially in the light of the Viceroy’s assurance that this composition was not to be regarded as a precedent for the future. Mr. Jinnah has sought in his correspondence to bind the Viceroy to the condition that henceforth only Muslim Leaguers should be entitled to represent Muslims. Such a condition if accepted would mean that the proposed personnel is a precedent for the interim period and indeed for all time, in other words, the Congress can never hope to send Muslims to the Executive Council. To that position the Congress will not reduce itself under any circumstances because it would constitute a triumph for Mr. Jinnah who has maintained for some years that the Congress is only a Hindu organisation. How this crisis will be overcome it is difficult to say. But at the moment it is graver than any which in the past threatened to wreck a settlement. Mr. Jinnah apparently feels it a point over which he cannot give way. Gandhiji for his part attaches the same vital importance to the practical recognition of the Congress as a national and not just a Hindu organisation. On the side of the Cabinet Mission there is a growing feeling that had the Congress really entertained such strong sentiment in favour of finding a place for a Muslim of nationalist sympathies it should have been made clear from the beginning. At the fag end of three months’ stay in Delhi in trying weather, the Ministers are very near the point of exhaustion of their own patience and their resources. More seriously than at any time during the present negotiations it is possible to say that the danger of complete failure looms ahead”.

The Congress announced its acceptance of the long-term plan of the Cabinet Mission on June 26 and the rejection of the proposal for an interim Government. “A somewhat intriguing situation has developed as a result of the Congress decision”, wrote the Delhi Correspondent. “It was not easy to take, Gandhiji remaining till the end unconvinced about the wisdom of the step the Working Committee was contemplating, his instinct rebelling against certain aspects of the long-term scheme. The Congress decision has come as a great surprise almost to everyone and creates an unexpected situation both for the Viceroy and the Muslim League. Had the Congress rejected both parts of the Cabinet Mission’s scheme, the Viceroy would conceivably have gone ahead with the formation of the interim Government with the assistance of the League and such other parties as might be willing to co-operate. On the other hand, had approval been accorded to both parts the Viceroy’s task would have

been comparatively easy. The Congress avoiding both alternatives, has stated the reason for its inability to join the interim Government, the plain inference being that it would be glad to join if the obstacles could be removed. Indeed its participation in the constituent assembly is conditional upon among other things the formation of a satisfactory interim Government."

The Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy decided to adjourn negotiations for an interim Government and in the meanwhile to establish a caretaker Government of officials. On July 24 it was officially reported that the elections to the Constituent Assembly had been completed. It was stated that the "cream of India's leadership" had been elected to the Constituent Assembly, with the Congress having an absolute majority (207 seats in a house of 389). Of the 216 general seats the Congress lost only nine and the Muslim League lost only five out of 78 Muslim seats.

On July 29, reversing its earlier decision, the Muslim League Council withdrew its support to the Cabinet Mission's plan and decided to launch "Direct Action" to achieve Pakistan. C. Rajagopalachari, who had done so much to make the Congress and Gandhi go half way to meet the League, was disgusted with the performance of the League leadership. He said "Mr. Jinnah dreads putting his feet on the shore of constructive responsibility and prefers ever to be riding on the sea of controversy. We can pay almost any price for securing the co-operation of all parties, communities and interests so that we may begin Swaraj in peace and under conditions most favourable for reconstruction. But if Muslim Leadership unfortunately insists that Swaraj must begin with ugly demonstrations and conflicts, I suppose we must face the difficulty."

There was a dramatic change in the political scene on August 12 when The Hindu published from its Wardha Correspondent a communique from Viceroy's House, Delhi, (which he must have got hold of before it was released from Delhi) which said that in response to the Viceroy's invitation to the Congress President to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim Government, the Congress President, Mr. Nehru, had accepted the invitation. It added that Mr. Nehru would visit Delhi shortly to discuss his proposals with the Viceroy.

The Wardha Correspondent added: "At 5 o'clock this evening the Congress President received a letter from the Viceroy and it brought the long-awaited news of the latter's decision to form the interim Government and invite Pandit Nehru to assist him in that task. There is no disguising the fact that there is complete satisfaction among leaders that events have taken the right turn and among those prominent leaders who had so much to do with influencing and shaping Congress policy, the comment could be heard. "Fitting culmination of ceaseless efforts of the last five years". It is pointed out that the offer made to the Congress President was unconditional and the British Government have now left the matter entirely in the hands of the Congress with the sincere conviction that the Congress would deal with the minorities justly."

The Hindu described the Viceroy's action as the "most decisive step". It added: "The statesmanship that has inspired this move is nonetheless striking because it is in consonance with tried democratic practice everywhere. The Muslim League, perhaps unconsciously, made it easier for the Government to embark on this course — which should have been taken much earlier — by



reversing its earlier decision to accept the Government's proposals for framing India's future constitution"

Disturbances broke out in Calcutta on August 16 which was observed by the Muslim League as "Direct Action Day" and rioting continued for many days thereafter with one newspaper reporting that 600 had been killed and 2500 injured in three day's bloodbath. The Hindu put a blunt question to Jinnah: "Has it occurred to Mr Jinnah that his followers have failed to come up to his expectations, it may be because of the extremely inflammatory utterances of League Leaders (not excluding himself) since the Muslim League Council passed the resolution on Direct Action? Charged as they thought with the task of preparing the Muslims for direct action against all who, they chose to believe, were their enemies and particularly those who dared to oppose the demand for Pakistan, these leaders have gone about it with gusto. In public statements and speeches they have openly talked about a holy war, killing and getting killed and resistance to constituted authority to the last Muslim! Foremost among these firebrands are the League Ministers of Bengal and Sind. When these gentlemen who are themselves responsible for law and order in their provinces could thus openly preach violence, is it to be wondered at that in one at least of the provinces unprecedented violence has broken out? Or that the more ardent of the League's followers saw in the Direct Action day not a token demonstration in preparation for the 'coming struggle' but the D-Day itself?"

The Delhi Correspondent in a dispatch on August 21 made a grave disclosure. He said "It is worth recording a somewhat revealing conversation between a member of the League Working Committee and a prominent American Correspondent. Discussing the possibilities arising out of the celebration of August 16 as "Direct Action Day", some days before the event, this Muslim Leaguer seems to have said: "If you want to see real fireworks go to Calcutta" Taking that tip the Correspondent flew to Calcutta, witnessed the first day's riots, took numerous pictures and returned to Delhi."

Low had a cartoon too on the Calcutta killing. It showed a table at the head of which sat Pandit Nehru and round it were other Indians. The table was marked Delhi and a seat on Pandit Nehru's right was vacant. Above the table was shown a scene, depicting vultures and pariah dogs looking at heaped corpses with the figure of a man obviously intended to be Jinnah, watching the ghastly scene, which was labelled Calcutta. The caption was: "Among those absent".

The interim Government led by Nehru and consisting of 12 members, was sworn in on September 2, 1946. The Hindu wrote "The people of this vast country devoutly share the prayerful mood in which Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru has declared that he and his colleagues are entering on their historic role as the first Indian Government of India. Men of goodwill all over the world have recognised that this is an occasion out of the ordinary. The words of hope and cheer with which they have greeted the new Government spring from the conviction that the emergence into freedom of India's 400 millions must make a change for ever in the character of international relations which have all along been governed by the law of the jungle. And they are no doubt equally inspired by the yearning that the systematic application on so large a scale of a political technique based on the ideology of tolerance and co-operation may prove so fruitful of results as to have world-wide repercussions. The Congress

fully knows that it has aroused high expectations and that its performance in office will be judged by exacting standards. But no organised political party in the world ever brought to such a task greater moral earnestness, a more complete freedom from the spirit of narrow partisanship."

The Hindu said: "It is a tragedy that the setting up of the Provisional Government should nevertheless have provoked bitter antagonism in one quarter, this threatens to add enormously to the difficulties with which it may have even otherwise to contend... May we appeal to Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues to give the members of the new Government and the political parties they represent credit for that honesty of purpose and that patriotism which they would claim for themselves"

In a message to the nation on assuming office Nehru said: "Destiny has conspired to test us in new ways and we have answered this call of destiny with courage and faith in India's future. The dream of her freedom that has inspired us for so long beckons to us again and seems nearer realisation. May we prove worthy servants of India and her people"

In another appeal to Jinnah to show tolerance to the new Government The Hindu said: "Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues are doing no service either to their party or to the country by trying to keep the political temperature at boiling point by continually using language which must intensify mutual suspicion and whip up the base passions of the multitude. 'The slate must be wiped clean' says Mr. Jinnah, 'and a fresh start must be made' We would suggest he can set an example by schooling himself to moderation in language"

In a dispatch from Delhi Shiva Rao wrote of the impressions made by the interim Government in the first two weeks of its administration "Two weeks of administration by the interim Government seem to have resulted in what one official aptly described as a 'bloodless revolution'. Those who grew accustomed to the old regime feel almost bewildered by the changes which have been introduced. The practice had developed during the war of Executive Councillors seldom going to the Secretariat, some went two or three times a week and some only for a couple of hours every morning. As the demand for office space became intensified, some Executive Councillors were told that they could work at home and their offices were converted into offices for assistants. The Secretaries saw the Viceroy more regularly than the Members of the Government who sometimes had to be content with seeing the Private Secretary. On an important occasion during the war (it was the arrest of a top-ranking Congress leader) an official communique with the familiar words, 'Governor-General in Council' stated the reasons for the action. One Member more daring than the rest protested that the Executive Council as a whole had never discussed the subject and the communique was therefore misleading and inaccurate. A senior member present gravely explained that the G. G. and the member for the Department concerned could come to a decision and announce it on behalf of the entire Government. The Viceroy's autocracy seemed limitless - the Secretary of State alone exercising an occasional though invisible restraint. Now suddenly burst into office 12 men who are in a hurry for Independence. Their assumption of office was marked by scenes of enthusiasm which must have puzzled and intrigued the residents in the Viceroy's House. Shouts of the multitude had never before rent their respectable air. Vast crowds gathered every evening after six to see the members of the

'Cabinet' disperse after their daily meetings in Pandit Nehru's room in the Secretariat. These members remain in office regularly morning and afternoon. The Secretaries do not see the Viceroy unless their Members want them to do so. To the men who have watched and fostered the old imperial tradition — of never seeing the Viceroy without the morning coat and striped trousers, spreading the red carpet wherever His Excellency or Her Excellency went — these innovations have come with a tremendous shock. All diplomatic representatives in New Delhi have called on Pandit Nehru to pay their respective Government's respects. Viceregal brakes do not seem to be effective, said someone to me yesterday commenting on the speed with which Pandit Nehru and the new Cabinet have broken through all old traditions and limitations."

The Bombay Correspondent reported on September 25: "An index of the new spirit and tempo prevailing at Delhi is the celerity with which representations from public bodies are being dealt with by the Government." The Correspondent mentioned a complaint made to Pandit Nehru by the Indian Insurance Companies Association, Bombay, of unfair discrimination against India by the East African Governments and added that Nehru took immediate action on the representation and informed the Association within 24 hours of the receipt of the representation. This seems to be the first occasion when a representation has been attended to with such dispatch by any department of the Government of India."

The Muslim League decided to join the interim Government in October, 1946, and the decision was conveyed to the Viceroy by Jinnah. The Delhi Correspondent who gave the news on October 13 added: "That the Muslim League has decided to enter the interim Government on the basis of the Viceroy's invitation and assurances given in his last broadcast and not on the basis of a settlement with the Congress may have its logical political repercussions in the future. However that may be, the fact that the League is entering the interim Government may be regarded as a positive gain if in the process of working together the Congress and the League find it fruitful to achieve a true coalition. If not, sooner or later there must be a parting of ways and the League may find itself obliged to leave the administration of the country in the hands of the majority political party."

On October 15, the League nominees for the interim Government were announced and the list of five names included a Depressed Classes member, Mr. J. N. Mandal of Bengal and Mr. Jinnah himself kept out. The New Delhi Correspondent noted that with the exception of Liaquat Ali Khan who attempted co-operation with the late Bhulabhai Desai to achieve a Congress-League settlement, the other Leaguers "represent the vocally extreme section of the League and who therefore are bound to attempt to disrupt the harmony of the interim Government in as many ways as they possibly can. It is significant that Mr. Jinnah in his choice of League nominees should have left out such persons as Khwaja Nazimuddin and Nawab Mahomed Ismail. It is presumed that the League leaders who have stood for a settlement with the Congress have been studiously omitted. The second criticism and in many ways a very serious one is that the League nomination of a Scheduled Caste representative should have been accepted by the Viceroy and H. M.'s Government. The League, unlike the Congress whose membership is open to all Indians without regard to their community, is a purely communal organisation and it has no moral right to

nominate anyone other than a Muslim and a Leaguer. By nominating Mr J N Mandal, at present a Minister in the Suhrawardhy Ministry in Bengal, the League apparently seeks to create a position in which it could claim to represent the interests of the Scheduled Castes as much as the Congress."

For The Hindu satisfaction that the League had after all decided to join the interim Government was tempered by doubts "as to the purpose with which the League comes in and misgivings as to the spirit in which the new members will conduct themselves inside the Government". The Hindu criticised the inclusion of Mr Mandal and said the League which was a political organisation "which declaredly exists solely for promoting the interests of Muslims as a community" could not speak for the Depressed Classes. The Hindu said that Liaquat Ali Khan had in the past shown himself capable of taking a sober view of the inescapable political realities in India and it should be possible for him to "come to a working arrangement" with Nehru.

The entry of the League into the interim Government was the signal for the outbreak of communal riots in East Bengal and especially in Naokhali District where incredible atrocities were perpetrated on innocent men, women and children. The Calcutta Correspondent wrote. "The great Calcutta killing threatens to pale into insignificance, if it has not already done so, compared to what is happening in the districts of Naokhali, Dacca and Tipperah in East Bengal. More than 10,000 refugees, men, women and children have reached Calcutta during the last three days from Naokhali District and while many of these have taken shelter with their friends and relatives, a good number of them are staying at relief centres, organised by the different organisations in Calcutta. According to this morning's report received at the office of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee there are now more than 15,000 refugees in Ramganj in Naokhali District and another 12,000 in Chandpur in Tipperah District, besides a considerable number at Comilla. Besides arson, loot and murder, the abduction of women and forcible conversion of helpless families to Islam seem to be a common feature of the disturbances in East Bengal. I have seen a message which reached the office of the Provincial Hindu Mahasabha this morning from a person who wrote from Ramganj Thana that he and his family were quite safe after embracing Islam. There are reports that the Hindus in villages had been asked to support the demand for Pakistan in writing if they valued their lives".

The Political Department of the Government of India did not take kindly to the assumption of office by the Congress and when Nehru, accompanied by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, visited the North-West Frontier towards the end of October, it showed its hand by organising demonstrations against him. The Peshawar Correspondent in a dispatch said the "hand of the Political Department was seen behind these hostile demonstrations. It has been alleged that an official of the Political Department had been coaching the tribal maliks under their pay for several days before Pandit Nehru's arrival. It is stated that most of the best known leaders of the tribes have been prevented from meeting Pandit Nehru". Referring to the tribal maliks, the Correspondent said they owed their position entirely to the Political Department. "They fulfil the same role as Khan Bahadurs in our provinces. The fact is that the Political Department today is a gigantic vested interest. Crores of rupees are spent annually by the Political Department in the form of subsidies, bribes, secret grants,

and other payments. No accounts are kept. The present tribal administration has become an anachronism in the modern age. And entirely state-managed 'demonstrations' have no value whatsoever as regards the real feeling of the local people towards Pandit Nehru's tour. But the real significance of the demonstrations is that they have brought home to the Minister for External Affairs as nothing else would have done the inner working of the Political Department. Dr Khan Sahib bluntly accused the Political Department of having intrigued against Pandit Nehru's tour. Pandit Nehru warned the Political Agent that he would order a full enquiry.

The Muslim League now posed another problem to the Viceroy by not rescinding its resolution withdrawing support to the Cabinet Mission's long-term plan. That it had no intention of doing so became clear when Jinnah issued a directive to League members not to attend the opening session of the Constituent Assembly on December 9. The Hindu asked, "How long is Mr Jinnah going to be allowed to play fast and loose with a situation which unless resolutely tackled may soon land the country in chaos? His attempt to make a grievance of the Viceroy's decision to start the Assembly according to schedule is patently unconvincing. Beyond indulging in vaguely terrifying pictures as to the probable consequences of what he was pleased to describe as 'playing into the hands of the Congress', Mr Jinnah was able to adduce no new fact or objective consideration in favour of a postponement. The sum and substance of Mr Jinnah's recent statements is that the League will not accept the policy outlined in the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16. In the face of this refusal the Viceroy can hardly acquiesce, consistently with the Government's repeated declarations and his own past pronouncements, in so patent an attempt to defeat their intentions. Mr. Nehru has raised a crucial issue by saying: 'It was clear from Mr. Jinnah's statements that the League entered the Government not to work it but because it feared it would be weakened if it kept out'. It was also clear from Mr Jinnah's letters to the Viceroy that the League does not accept the statement of May 16. If so how could it continue in the interim Government?" The Hindu added "In a forthright speech at the meeting of the Subjects Committee on the eve of the Congress session, in Meerut, Mr Nehru has pointed out that as a matter of fact the interim Government ceased to function as a unit or in a manner consistent with the avowed purposes for which it was established ever since the League nominees were brought in. He has made serious charges against the Viceroy and the permanent services of attempting in the old, all too familiar way which one thought had been discarded with the enunciation of the new policy, to play off the League wing of the Government against the rest. The very fact that such charges should be made publicly by the Leader of the largest party in the country who was not long ago entrusted with the task of forming a Government which was intended to function in practice as a Cabinet, is enough to show that the country is again on the brink of a crisis which may be averted only by prompt and resolute action on the part of the British Government. The Government must invite Mr. Jinnah to reconsider his attitude in time to allow League representatives to attend the Constituent Assembly or to withdraw his followers from the interim Government. It gives us no pleasure to voice this demand. For we have always believed that the co-operation of every section of opinion in this country should be secured if possible in the task of solving our

problems, present and future. But if the League's participation is going to add to the problems instead of helping to remove them it would be far better for the other parties who believe in constructive action for common ends to get on as best they can unimpeded by the constant friction and obstruction which is the League's only contribution."

What Nehru told the Subjects Committee of the Congress, referred to by *The Hindu*, was reported by its Special Correspondent from Meerut on November 21. He wrote "Pandit Nehru in an outspoken declaration in the Congress Subjects Committee this afternoon said that the atmosphere in the interim Government after the League's entry had become so strained that Congress members had twice threatened to resign. 'Our patience is fast reaching the limit', he said. 'If these things continue a struggle on a large scale is inevitable'. He charged the Viceroy with failure to carry on the Government in the spirit in which he had started. 'He is gradually removing the wheels of the car and this is leading to a critical situation'. After coming into the Government, the League had been endeavouring to establish itself as the 'King's Party' in the Government. The British Government for its part had been exploiting this position for its own purposes. 'There is also a mental alliance between the League and senior British Officials', he added.

"It must come as a shock", *The Hindu* wrote, "to those who had believed in the genuineness of his (Wavell's) desire to bring about a smooth transfer of power from British to Indian hands that he should have allowed the prospects of a settlement of the major constitutional problem to be impeded, if not frustrated, by the petty manoeuvrings of the fossilised remnants of a bureaucracy which had long since forgotten to grow with the times or learn the lessons of history."

On November 26, Reuter said from London that the British Government had summoned Wavell home for consultations and to bring with him two leaders each of the Congress and the League and a Sikh representative for discussions on the political situation. The New Delhi Correspondent, who confirmed the report said that Congress leaders were unlikely to accept the invitation to go to London with the Viceroy. He added: "During the last few days the Viceroy has been in touch with London seeking advice on what must be an extremely unpleasant predicament for himself. Mr. Jinnah has come out with an emphatic denial that he gave the Viceroy any assurance about the League's participation or co-operation in the Constituent Assembly. On what basis did Lord Wavell convey to Mr. Nehru on October 23 Mr. Jinnah's assurances? Pandit Nehru's and Sardar Patel's speeches at Meerut gave the unmistakable impression that a major crisis was rapidly developing. Sardar Patel, however made it clear that whoever might vacate office, it would not be the Congress leaders in the interim Government. There is no doubt that relations between them and the Viceroy have deteriorated to such an extent that a desperate remedy may have to be found. The fact which is patent to everybody in New Delhi is that the Viceroy is surrounded by three or four European I.C.S. officers to form an inner Cabinet of their own. Unfortunately, Lord Wavell seems to have persuaded himself that the Congress leaders are unreasonable and uncompromising, intent only on throwing the League nominees out of office. The area of conflict between him and the Congress leaders has been steadily growing ever since they assumed office. He did not take kindly to the conventions they

have established Pandit Nehru's frontier policy is distasteful to him and Sir Olaf Caroe, Governor of N W F P. There was a further case for disagreement when Pandit Nehru refused to accept the Viceroy's suggestion that the personnel of the Indian delegation to New York should be changed by the inclusion of Mr Ispahani and Begum Shah Nawaz. These past events having led to the present crisis and the outlook for the future being bleak, the Viceroy doubtless has suggested to the British Government the present step of a small conference in London which in reality may amount to one more attempt on his part to scrap the plan that is distasteful both to the Muslim League in India and the Conservatives in London."

As anticipated, the Congress rejected the invitation to go to London while Jinnah accepted it. However on November 29 it was announced that on receipt of a personal appeal from Attlee, Nehru had decided to go to London. The talks in London however failed and this was announced by the British Government on December 6. The cause of the failure lay in the differing interpretations put on the clause in the Cabinet Mission's plan relating to grouping of provinces. The official statement said "The Cabinet Mission have throughout maintained the view that the decisions of the sections should in the absence of an agreement to the contrary, be taken by a simple majority vote of the representatives in the sections. This view has been accepted by the Muslim League but the Congress have put forward a different view. They have asserted that the true meaning of the statement, read as a whole, is that the provinces have the right to decide both as to grouping and as to their own constitution. H.M.'s Government have had legal advice which confirms that the statement of May 16 means what the Cabinet Mission have already stated was their intention. This part of the statement as so interpreted must therefore be considered an essential part of the scheme of May 16 for enabling the Indian people to formulate a constitution which H.M.'s Government would be prepared to submit to Parliament. It should therefore be accepted by all parties in the Constituent Assembly".

The Government suggested that if the Congress failed to accept its interpretation it could refer it to the Federal Court and pending its decision the meeting of the Constituent Assembly could be postponed.

That the London talks failed was not a surprise to *The Hindu*. It wondered why they were held at all. The paper added: "If the British Government is not thinking of going back on its historic decision to relinquish control, leaving it to the Indian parties and interests to settle the future among themselves as best they can, it should see that the policy disclosed in its latest statement, of keeping all the strings in its own hands and pulling them in an arbitrary way must reduce the Constituent Assembly to a farce and defeat its declared objective".

On December 9, the Constituent Assembly met in New Delhi under the presidency of Dr. Satchidananda Sinha. *The Hindu* described it as a "historic occasion". It was the culmination, it said, "of that popular awakening to a sense of national solidarity and high destiny which began nearly a century ago and which has sustained a struggle for political freedom unique in many respects. The struggle is by no means over. The popular representatives who have assembled to shape India's constitutional future are fully conscious of this fact and may therefore be expected to approach their extraordinarily

difficult and delicate task with the high seriousness and circumspection that are pre-eminently called for. On the eve of the meeting of the Assembly the British Government has thrown a veritable bombshell and the manner of its intervention even more than the substance of what it has said is bound enormously to complicate the issues which the Assembly will have to face. But the very fact that in spite of all the difficulties and the positive attempts made to prevent the Assembly from beginning to function, it has begun its task at the appointed hour may be regarded as a victory for the principle of self-determination for the Indian people".

Even as the House of Commons was debating India and Churchill was accusing the Labour Government of letting down the Muslims and the Depressed Classes, the Constituent Assembly went on with its work, electing Dr Rajendra Prasad as its President and discussing an "Objectives" resolution. Describing Pandit Nehru's speech on the resolution, the Delhi Correspondent wrote: "In the Constituent Assembly this morning Pandit Nehru in one of the greatest speeches of his career and one of the most memorable it is the privilege of anyone to hear, introduced the resolution outlining the objectives which the future constitution of India should aim at and toward which the Constituent Assembly should address its labours. The introduction of the resolution and his speech both in Hindi and English took exactly one hour and the House — which since its inauguration one must admit had never been in good cheer following the publication of the British Government's statement of December 6—took heart and was revived after listening to the quiet, solemn and determined words of Pandit Nehru affirming the unbending resolve of the country to march onward to its goal of freedom whatever the obstacles in the way and through whatever further struggles lay ahead of them".



**W**HILE CONCENTRATING ON the political developments of 1946, we have overlooked some non-political happenings as reported and discussed in the pages of *The Hindu* and to these we shall now devote our attention. There was, for instance, the protest by the Commissioner of the Kumbakonam Municipality to the use of the word "Kumbakonam" in a derogatory sense by a Councillor of the Madras Corporation. In a letter to the Editor the Commissioner referred to the protest voiced by the Kumbakonam Ratepayers Association and also to the resolution passed by the Madras Corporation expunging the reference to Kumbakonam from the record of its proceedings and appealing to Councillors not to use the word "Kumbakonam" in the manner objected to. He added: "It is the desire of the Municipal Council that such unwarranted and irresponsible reference to Kumbakonam should not be made. I hope you will also agree with the Council that Kumbakonam which has been the birth-place of intelligent and illustrious sons of India and known to be one of the enlightened cities in India, should not be associated with any sinister meaning either by reference or record. I therefore request you kindly to help the Council and the citizens of Kumbakonam in seeing that the word is expunged from the dictionaries wherever it is found and also that the sneering reference is not made by anybody hereafter".

A "Kumbakonian" writing from Kurnool did not take such a tragic view of the whole thing. He said "When among friends, I have afforded many merry moments by being the target of facetious remarks and "Kumbakonam" gave spice to all these remarks. It was never taken or rather mistaken for a statement of fact, and "Kumbakonam" and "vice" were never deemed to be interchangeable. The recent resolution of the Kumbakonam Municipal Council on this point tends to give it a bad odour which was not there before. To be able to enjoy humour in lighter vein – at one own's expense – is a rare gift. I am sure my townsmen do not lack it".

On January 4, 1946, *The Hindu* had the privilege of publishing exclusive articles by the new Indonesian leaders thanks to the enterprise of its Correspondent, T. G. Narayanan who wrote a series of articles on Indonesia and its leaders. In the first article President Sukarno wrote. "On August 17, 1945, the people of Indonesia achieved their freedom. We have been on our own for little over full four months now. I am happy to avail myself at such a time of the

opportunity extended to me by the kind courtesy of The Hindu of conveying to the people of India the sincere greetings and good wishes of the people and Government of the Republic of Indonesia We hail you as brothers and fellow fighters in the cause of freedom"

Dr. Sukarno said: "Among you, our brothers and comrades in India, there are hosts of sympathisers and helpers Your workers have struck as a gesture of solidarity. Your Press is supporting our cause Your great leader, Nehru's passionate utterances on behalf of our freedom have been a source of immense strength to us in our hour of trial and tribulation How shall I ever be able to convey to you the deep stirring of emotion that wells up in every one of us when we think of the wonderful manner in which you have rallied to our cause? Deep down his heart every Indonesian utters a silent prayer. 'God bless you, our brothers and friends, in India' Dr Sukarno's article was followed by those of Dr. Mahomed Hatta, Vice-President of Indonesia and other Indonesian leaders.

T. G. Narayanan covered Nehru's visit to Singapore on March 18, 1946, sponsored by the Viceroy and as a representative of the Congress "The reception to Pandit Nehru and the procession through the city was one that crowned royalty might envy", said the Correspondent "Shaking hands with your Correspondent Pandit Nehru remarked 'It is good to see an old face You have been hanging on - have you - till I arrived here' " The Correspondent went on to describe how Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Commander, South-East Asia, shook hands with Nehru and took him to the drawing room in Government House where the two sat together for a chat over a cup of tea "After 15 minutes Pandit Nehru and Lord Mountbatten came out together for something most unexpected and not on the programme Lord Louis stepped into an open car with Pandit Nehru and rode in state as it were upto the Indian Y M C. A. Welfare Centre It was the neatest diplomatic stroke and so casually executed that Lord Mountbatten displayed real genius in ensuring smoothness and success of Pandit Nehru's visit and stay in this country Many thousands of Indian army troops who lined the route from Government House upto the Y M. C. A. Centre were most pleasantly surprised and were touched at this mark of courtesy and goodwill shown by Lord Louis and they broke into cheering in which along with "Nehru-ki-jai", "Lord Mountbatten-ki-jai" combined in pleasant harmony Lord Mountbatten must have been pleasantly surprised himself at the open patriotic enthusiasm surging in the breasts of so many of his men".

On his way back to India an incident happened at Rangoon airport, which Nehru disclosed to the Delhi Correspondent who telephoned to him at Allahabad "In spite of the carefully laid plan of the Government of India", the Correspondent wrote, "and the Government of Burma to prevent him from contacting anyone in Burma, Pandit Nehru managed to meet General Aung San at Rangoon and he had a couple of hours' talk with him That, however, was a lucky accident Pandit Nehru's Dakota developed engine trouble just as it was nearing Rangoon and a landing at Mingaladon airfield was necessitated. The news of Pandit Nehru's presence at the airstrip became known and Gen Aung San dashed to the airport to meet him and nobody could stop that Nehru had a hearty laugh over the incident as he related it".

V. S. Srinivasa Sastri passed away on April 17, 1946 and The Hindu paid a noble tribute to one who was always on the wrong side of the fence and whose policies and pronouncements it had criticised in language which was bitter and blunt. Wrote The Hindu "In the death of the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, India has lost an elder statesman of exceptional calibre and an ambassador of goodwill who made the name of his country respected in the far corners of the world. A full time politician for nearly 40 years of his life he had not the temperament that delights in manipulating the mass mind; nor indeed had he the slightest wish 'to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm'. The call to serve and sacrifice in the country's cause with practically no personal reward to look forward to appealed irresistibly to Mr. Sastri's idealism. He was characteristically consumed with doubts as to his ability to live up to the great responsibility that dedication to public service involved, for he was full of diffidence about himself, though the public which was fascinated by his magnificent personality and impressed by his stately assurance in speech and demeanour would not have thought so. He was a very humble man as well as very human. Strongly emotional by nature he assiduously schooled himself to moderation in public utterance; so that on the rare occasions when he let himself go his words could burn and scorch like molten lava. It was the insult to the dignity of human personality implicit in racial arrogance and colour prejudice that moved him to his depths. He had little bitterness in him. He had cultivated the cross bench mind with such painstaking zeal that it became habitual with him to see the other man's point of view almost better than his own. But for all his self-discipline there was something untamed about him. He himself used to say that he was an extremist at heart defending moderate courses. This much is true that there have been few men who have differed from the Congress more on the policies of the hour and yet have shown greater sympathy with its stand on national issues and respect for its integrity and devotion to the public weal. It was this that endeared him to Gandhiji and his memory will long survive".

When Gandhiji made a visit to the South late in January, 1946, he called on Srinivasa Sastri at the General Hospital in Madras where he was lying ill and the two friends spent some time together.

This was the occasion also when at a prayer meeting in the city Gandhiji recalled his first meeting with C. Rajagopalachari. He recalled that years ago it was in Madras that satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act had been first launched. He had come to Madras on that occasion on the invitation of Kasturiranga Iyengar who had put him up with C. Rajagopalachari. C. R. had then recently come over to Madras from Salem where he was a leading lawyer and doing useful work as Chairman of the Municipal Council. Gandhiji said he had at first felt a bit put out at Kasturiranga Iyengar putting him up with one who was a practising lawyer and a stranger to him at that time. But the late Mahadev Desai who was with him told him the next day that Rajaji was a precious find of Kasturiranga Iyengar and far from playing him a trick had selected an ideal host for him. Desai also told him that Rajaji would be prepared to throw away his practice in a trice at a word from Gandhiji. "I could hardly believe that a leading lawyer could give up his practice like that", Gandhiji said. "I however accepted Desai's testimony on faith. The subsequent events have however amply borne out Mr. Mahadev Desai's estimate. The Rajaji as I see him today is just what he was on the day when we first met".

When Gandhiji went to Naokhali in East Bengal in November, 1946, to bring relief and succour to the victims of communal frenzy, K Rangaswami, who was long stationed at Wardha and intimate with the Mahatma, covered his tour for The Hindu. Reporting from a place called Chaumuhari he said. "It was a completely devastated and ghastly scene that Gandhiji saw this morning at Gopairbagh village where 20 persons were killed by armed goondas on October 15. Gandhiji saw homesteads where 11 families lived together and in each one of these houses one or more persons have been killed. In one house Gandhiji saw bloodstains. Looting had been thoroughly carried out and earth in the kitchen in two houses had been dug up in quest of hidden treasure. Mr. Sasi Kumar Das was the leader of one family. He gave Rs. 1,500 as subscription to the Muslim League on October 11 but that did not save him from death on October 15. Gandhiji was shown a place where 20 dead bodies were piled up and burnt. The fate that befell the womenfolk who were forced to embrace Islam is best left unsaid. At the meeting Gandhiji urged the refugees to forget the past and said he would like them to return home. He added he would not ask them to return unless he could find one good Hindu and one good Muslim who would agree to go and remain together in the village."

Reporting from another village the Correspondent said "Naokhali and Sonachaka, two villages which Gandhiji visited, are standing monuments to brutal crimes of every description—murder, arson, desecration of places of worship, loot and forcible conversion on mass scale. Members of the family of a retired railway engineer were the main targets of attack and eight persons died after putting up a fight. Looting went on for three days and nights and the only things the goondas left behind were broken pots, torn clothes, and loose cotton removed from beddings, obviously after searching for hidden wealth. It was in one of these houses that three boys in their teens were brutally done to death, one in the arms of his grandmother who vainly pleaded for his life".

On January 2, 1947, Gandhiji set out on a walking tour of the interior villages of Naokhali District on a mission of restoring communal harmony. Satis Das Gupta, Dr. Sushila Nayar and Nirmal Kumar Bose accompanied him while Sardar Jivan Singh of the Azad Hind Fauj and his volunteers followed with a bamboo *doli* to carry Gandhiji if he felt exhausted. The Superintendent of Police with his men was in attendance. Walking across semi-dry, freshly ploughed paddy fields, Gandhiji stopped for a while at the house of a Harijan peasant to have a sip of orange juice which was offered with great affection and devotion. Gandhiji was received at Silapur, a wayside village by a Maulana who offered him a variety of fruits which Gandhiji distributed to children. "The Maulana", the Correspondent said, "appeared overwhelmed with joy that Gandhiji had graced his humble homestead with his presence. He requested Gandhiji to visit the village another day when he would collect Muslims of two village unions to meet him. Gandhiji acceded to his request and continued his journey. Half way up Mr. Souren Bose commenced singing Ram Dhun, all the members in Gandhiji's party joining in chorus. The crowd which was not more than a dozen when Gandhiji left Srirampur swelled to hundreds as the journey advanced and the big procession marched in single file along a narrow path".

The Hindu thought that Gandhiji's walking tour "may prove as significant as the historic Dandi march of 15 years ago. It is bound to be much more difficult because the obstacles to be overcome are much greater. The reward of

success will however be even more dazzling and the Mahatma has never been the one to count the cost. An old man of 78 he goes forth unbowed by the weight of many sorrows and disappointments, to preach the gospel of peace and courage in a sorely distracted land, one is inevitably reminded of the Buddha going out to spread his message. The influence that the burning sincerity of such a mind may exercise on the unsophisticated poor is not to be measured in terms of miles covered or numbers contacted. To the simple villager of East Bengal, Hindu or Muslim, who comes upon Gandhiji in his own home terrain, the Mahatma's presence should be a powerful reminder of the overriding claims of that common humanity of which he stands as a pre-eminent symbol. And it should teach them too to remember the past with forbearance and look forward to the future with quiet courage."

In December 1946, Harry Miller, who was acting as London Correspondent in the absence of Leonard W. Matters and who was later to be for a brief period the Karachi Correspondent of *The Hindu* after partition, submitted a list of questions to George Bernard Shaw on the Indian situation and the answers were truly Shavian in manner and content.

Asked if he agreed with the widely held view that a period of internal strife and perhaps civil war was the inevitable prelude to an independent India, Shaw replied: "The civil war is already on, there is no perhaps about it. But it will pass as it did in Ireland. Meanwhile, the British must not take sides on the pretence of maintaining order. Indians must be free to cut one another's throats until they are tired of it".

Asked if he thought the present troubles in India would end with the withdrawal of British forces, Shaw said: "The conquerors of India are all dead, leaving us the conquest as a hard fact with all its consequences. No use blaming us for it. We must withdraw as best we can". About Churchill's attitude to India he said: "Mr. Churchill has his opinion and I mine. Neither matters a damn to India". Asked what advice he would give to H. M.'s Government to solve the problem Shaw burst out, "I am not an adviser to H. M.'s Government, nor to Congress, nor to the League. I have said repeatedly that the Anglo-Indian habit of cadging for testimonials from British celebrities is as ridiculous as it is futile. What do I know about India? Who am I that I should advise 300 millions of people who have never heard of me? They must solve their own problems as we in England have to solve ours. We have so far not been successful enough to make either our example or advice worth following".

The playwright wrote his answers underneath the questions and complained to the Correspondent at the top of the questionnaire that he had left little space for him to write his answers. *The Hindu* published a facsimile of the questions and answers, by Shaw on March 23, 1947. Leonard W. Matters, who was in Madras at the time wrote to Miller on December 20, 1946: "Shaw's replies to your questions have come at a most appropriate moment and Mr. Srinivasan thinks there is no doubt they will be read with very sharp interest in Delhi where the Constituent Assembly is now sitting. Mr. Srinivasan has expressed his high appreciation of this effort on your part".

When the War Crimes Trial Court, set up by the victorious Allies at Nuremberg, to try "War Criminals", sentenced to death on October 1, 1946, 12 leading Nazis, including Goering and Ribbentrop, *The Hindu* questioned the right of the Allies to try the accused. It said: "It is astonishing that they (the

Allies) have neglected to make this trial, which they claim will set a precedent in international relations, something that might resemble a proper judicial process. The prosecutors and the judges are both drawn from the allied nations and neutrals have been carefully excluded. If the German leaders had really started a world war the whole world had a right to judge them, not excluding the German, Italian, Austrian, Czech and other peoples. The Soviet Government was during the war always anxious to insist that their quarrel was not with the Germans but the Hitlerites. Yet at Nuremburg no German not even the persecuted German Jew was permitted to sit on the bench. As every one who has read any history knows aggressive wars and conspiracies have never been regarded as crimes in law. They may be regarded quite properly as morally unjustifiable but the hard fact remains that there is no world code under which prosecution can be launched. And it is an elementary canon of justice that a man can be tried for an offence only if he breaks a law which was recognised as such at the time that he committed the offence. The truth is that all the policies and acts that led to the second world war are international in their motivation and causation as in any previous war and it is perfectly sustainable that the groups in Britain, France and elsewhere who connived at the failure of the Weimar Republic and encouraged the rise of Fascism in Germany are as guilty of conspiracy as the Nazis themselves. It might have been supposed that having staged an impressive trial to demonstrate their guilt the Allies might have treated them as political offenders are usually treated, that is, with exile, imprisonment or loss of citizenship. But the Nuremburg verdict is full of contradictions, the Tribunal declined to declare the German General Staff, the Cabinet or the Storm troopers "criminal" as groups but found that individuals in these groups could be regarded as guilty. Is this because the Allies are afraid of the precedent that they are setting up for the future? We have no wish to maintain that Allied conduct during the war and after reached the same level as the German. But it cannot be said to differ in kind. Concentration Camps were not unknown in the British Empire, collective fines were levied in India not long ago. British planes bombed villages in Java and wiped them off the map, even today there is German slave labour in Britain and prisoners of war have not yet been repatriated. The Americans have the use of the atom bomb in Japan to answer for. . . International justice can only be administered when there is a genuine political world order. Nations which seek to arrogate to themselves the powers and rights that properly belong to an international court only succeed in spreading the suspicion that they are promoting their own interests under the pretence of carrying out the mandate of world opinion."

As India was entering the portals of freedom there was at least one Indian Liberal (or Moderate as the group was also called) who was not happy at the way things were moving and especially at the threat posed to the sovereignty of princely states. He was Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer who had thrown his lot with the ruling family of Travancore. In a letter to *The Hindu* on December 25, 1946, he said. "I have hardly ever commented on the contents of your editorials especially as I have a feeling that whether one agrees with them or not they usually take a refreshingly detached and objective view of events and policies. I am afraid, however, that I have mildly to protest against your editorial headed 'Free India's objectives'. Fully realising that the speeches made in the Constituent Assembly are inevitably influenced by the surrounding

atmosphere and the natural reluctance of even highly intellectual individuals to differ from old or new colleagues, may I be allowed to put a direct question? You refer to the topic of free India's objectives as all important. You assert that Indians of every school of thought wish to realise Pandit Nehru's objectives. You want the Indian princes to reflect on the logical result of non-co-operation with the work of the Assembly. You cannot forget that no duly accredited representative of the states was present when the objectives were deliberated upon, discussed or outlined. May I in these circumstances ask if it is consonant with the policy for which your valuable paper has stood for many years to take advantage of the absence of a particular group to pass a resolution avowedly affecting that group with calamitous results if they do not agree to the resolution passed in absentia?"

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer added: "May I submit that it is not wise nor even expedient to antagonise the rulers of Indian states at this stage? They have practically unanimously agreed to form part of an independent India. They have agreed and many have implemented their agreements that the rulers will hand over most of the responsibilities of administration to their people, claiming only a residual right of supervision and veto which for instance is actively exercised even in completely democratic countries like the U. S. A. There is a definite current of opinion in the world that the British system of what is called a monarchical figurehead is the resultant of special features connected with England. In any event these are questions which if they have to be discussed at all should be discussed in the presence of groups and persons sought to be affected."

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer said: "The assertion of the sovereignty of the people of Indian states need not be a necessary part of the work of the Constituent Assembly unless indeed the idea is to eliminate the states as such. If as is generally understood, this is not the intention of political leaders, the only consequence of raising this issue would be to multiply the fissiparous tendencies which are already too evident in the country. Does the Constituent Assembly wish to add the states to the ranks of those who are unlikely to co-operate with it?"

The Hindu had this to say in reply: "Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer seems to be very much exercised over the future of the princes as distinct from that of the states. His objection to the assertion of the people's sovereignty stems from this... If the rulers are really reconciled to parting on behalf of their people with so many of the rights connoted by sovereignty and are content to function like the President of the U. S. A. exercising only the residual right of supervision and veto, need they so violently object to the theoretical assumption that all sovereignty is ultimately derived from the people... It is an open secret that many princes claim that only they or their nominees can represent the states where it is a question of exercising one of the most important of sovereign rights. The states peoples organisations contend on the other hand that that right inheres in them. The most satisfactory solution would undoubtedly be for the rulers and their subjects to come to an understanding between themselves which the Constituent Assembly could accept and act upon. But unfortunately many rulers seem unwilling to do this with the result that the parties taking part in the Constituent Assembly by virtue of the confidence vested in them by the common people have had to indicate that only those who enjoy the

confidence of the states' people can be accepted as their representatives. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer writes 'May I submit it is not wise nor even expedient to antagonise the rulers of Indian states at this stage?'. We would go further and say that it is unwise to provoke unnecessary antagonism in any quarter. And that is counsel which the Indian princes would doubtless take to heart no less. They have declared themselves in favour of a united and independent India. They should see they will not be helping to achieve this by indulging in hair-splitting over such issues as where sovereignty resides. The resolution moved by Mr. Nehru does not touch the ruler's personal rights or succession, in the free India of the future these will be the domestic concern of the ruler and his people. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer and others like him who have as he says worked to bring the Indian states into line with popular opinion and to achieve a united India, should deem it their privilege to persuade the princes not to be obsessed by imaginary fears and not to adopt a Canute-like attitude towards changes which are inevitable and which if wisely regulated may redound as much to the advantages of the princes as of their peoples."

Jawaharlal Nehru replied to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer in the Constituent Assembly on January 23, 1947. He was replying to the debate on his objectives resolution which was later passed. A point had been raised, Nehru said, that the idea of sovereignty of the people enshrined in the resolution "does not commend itself to certain rulers of Indian states. That is a surprising objection and, if I may say so, if that objection is raised in all seriousness by anybody, be he ruler or Minister, it is enough to condemn the Indian states system and every ruler and Minister that exists in India. It is a scandalous thing for any man, however highly placed he may be, to say that he has any special divine dispensation to rule over human beings today. That is an intolerable presumption on any man's part and it is a thing which I hope this House will never admit for an instant and will repudiate if it is put before it".

The Hindu advised the princes (in an editorial on March 28, 1947) to see "that they can have even less plausible excuse for entertaining separatist ambitions than some of the religious minorities. Division of opinion inside the states rarely runs along the lines of communal cleavage where the masses are concerned. Where such a division exists between the ruler and the people, the former should see that it is to his interest not to exacerbate it by raising the slogan of independence as that might range him perhaps without his intending it, by the side of those forces which are aiming to disrupt the country from motives which he may on sober reflection record with dread. The princes' one ambition at this juncture should be to become the accepted leaders of their own people."

A reader was overwhelmed by emotion when he wrote to the Editor praising The Hindu's editorial on Thyagarajá, the great saint and music composer of Thiruvayar, on the occasion of the centenary of his death. Describing himself as a reader of 40 years' standing, he wrote on December 26, 1946: "The Hindu is usually so good that it has little chance of surpassing itself. But even this it sometimes does. Your leader on Thyagaraja was a veritable masterpiece, popular in appeal and at the same time satisfying the most exacting aesthetic demands."

What The Hindu wrote on December 22 was: "Once or twice in a millenium the human soul gathers itself up in a mighty upheaval; and a poet, a saint or a



master singer is born. He is made of the stuff of revolution. He contains in himself all the past and the future. His brief sojourn on earth is a benediction. Our common human kind learns to walk erect seeing in him the complete man, 'in apprehension, how like a god'. He profoundly affects our destiny by giving us new eyes. The extension of consciousness by which evolution takes a leap forward is always the work of the seer, the *Kranta darsee*. Today a hundred years after his passing away we remember Sri Thyagaraja with feelings of profound pride and gratitude which are tainted by no narrow considerations of patriotism or parochialism. In his universality he is like Shakespeare. Rooted in the rich soil of the Tamil country watered by the Cauveri which runs like a silver thread through many a song the mighty tree of his genius gives rest and refreshment to all who seek its hospitable shade. In music we have the nearest approach to a universal language, melody is the soul of music, and Thyagaraja is the soul of melody. The triumphal progress of his immortal song has just begun. Some of the finest minds of the West have felt its compelling attraction. Thyagaraja may well prove to be our greatest single contribution to the cause of world harmony."

As 1947 dawned, The Hindu attempted, in a lighter vein, to predict what it had in store for the world. "Unusual modesty is displayed by G. B. S. in denying that he knows what 1947 holds out for the world or for us in India. On the contrary certain things are predictable, it is certain that politicians will make many long speeches, that the roads will become worse and that there will be accidents, that prices will go up, till there is the inevitable slump, that firewood will become so scarce that we shall have to consider burning our furniture, that the horses we back will bring up the rear of the procession. In world politics we shall see more of the big powers pointing out each other's sins and the small powers throwing darts at the bigger nations. It is the good news that is impossible to predict. Whether India will solve the communal impasse or we shall be able to get enough cloth to remain decently covered is something that only the prophets and the astrologers can tell. It is in this field that the man to emulate is Mr. Leopold Amery whose attitude to 1947 is neatly described by the United Press of America as one of "cautious optimism."

The Hindu on January 2, 1947 welcomed the suggestion of Mr. Woodrow Wyatt, well known Labour member of Parliament and member of the Parliamentary Delegation which visited India in the previous year, that if there was no compromise within sight in the next few months, Britain must reshape her policy, renounce her pledges as beyond her capacity to discharge "and having given a due date and due warning, march out."

This was in fact what the British Government announced in February as we shall see. The Hindu said: "The sooner Britain effectively relinquishes control the better it will be for all concerned." It added: "Britain having deliberately decided that India should be free of British control and free to decide her own destiny, owes it to herself as well as to the people of this country to arrange for the transfer of power quickly, methodically and in a manner involving no unnecessary dislocation. She should not allow herself to be dominated either by a half-conscious desire to stick on or by the irresponsible mood that shouts 'After me, the deluge'."

On January 6, 1947, the All-India Congress Committee meeting in New Delhi by 99 votes to 52 adopted the Working Committee's resolution accepting the

British Government's interpretation of the grouping plan for provinces proposed by the Cabinet Mission which had led to failure of talks in Britain. As a protest Sarat Bose resigned from the Working Committee and another member, Jaya Prakash Narain led the opposition to the resolution. The Hindu wrote, "It may be too much to hope that this magnanimous gesture will convert the League overnight to co-operation. But the Congress has the satisfaction of having done the utmost to secure the objective of having free India's constitution 'framed by the people of India' on the basis of as wide an agreement as possible"

The Muslim League, however, refused to accept the A I C C resolution and demanded a declaration that the constitutional plan framed by the Cabinet Mission had failed. The Hindu said the "League had no warrant for impugning the sincerity of the Congress' acceptance of the statement of December 6". It urged the British Government to ask the League to enter the Constituent Assembly "forthwith if it does not want its case to go by default".

The crisis in the interim Cabinet grew worse and on February 7, the New Delhi Correspondent reported that following prolonged meetings among non-Muslim League members of the Interim Government a unanimous decision was reached to intimate to the Viceroy that the Karachi resolution of the Muslim League demanding the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and declaring its proceedings illegal, void and ultra vires, had created an "intolerable" situation. The Congress members felt, the Correspondent said, that the Viceroy committed a blunder in admitting the League's nominees into the interim Government without making sure of their co-operation both inside the Government and in the Constituent Assembly. "In spite of the A I C C. resolution accepting the British Cabinet's declaration of December 6, the Muslim League has not altered its previous decision. On the other hand it has gone further along the path of intransigence encouraged no doubt by the speeches of Mr. Churchill and Lord Simon. The Congress members feel that the time has come when the Viceroy should make it clear beyond doubt to the League's nominees in the interim Government that they should either reverse their Karachi resolution and enter the Constituent Assembly or resign their places in the interim Government. The firmness with which this view has been expressed seems significant. The administration has been virtually paralysed as the inevitable result of defiance from within. It is clear that a first class political crisis is rapidly developing. Lord Wavell is believed to have communicated the views of the non-Muslim League members of the interim Government to London"

In a dispatch on February 14, the same Correspondent revealed that Nehru and his colleagues had written another letter to the Viceroy pressing for speedy action on their earlier letter. He added: "This letter has also been communicated to H. M. G. and it will not be surprising if as on the previous occasion the contents of the letter are communicated to the League leader in Government to enable him to send on behalf of his bloc a further representation to H. M. G. If it is claimed that Pandit Nehru's first letter was shown to the League members of the interim Government as a matter of courtesy it does not appear that a similar courtesy was extended by the Viceroy, of showing to Congress members of Government the League members' reply".

"There are persistent reports here", the Correspondent said two days later, "that the Viceroy has expressed the view to the Labour Government that if the League nominees in the Interim Government are forced to quit office because of the Karachi resolution of the League Working Committee, the situation in the country might take a turn beyond his control. From the beginning of the crisis the Viceroy seems to have advised the British Government that Congress members would not resign from the Interim Government whatever might be the provocation. That illusion was finally dispelled yesterday by Mr. Patel's blunt assertion that resignation was inevitable unless there was a satisfactory response to Pandit Nehru's letter to the Viceroy. Then there was a hope expressed to London that if it really came to such a point the League might revise its Karachi resolution rather than quit office. Later still came a suggestion that the Cabinet could play for time by sending out its members to start a series of fresh negotiations. None of these suggestions seems to have borne fruit. The Congress leaders have made it clear beyond doubt that their patience has reached the point of exhaustion and delaying tactics would not meet the requirements of the situation. So far as the League is concerned, it is now considered extremely unlikely that Mr. Jinnah can be persuaded to withdraw the Karachi resolution. If the Viceroy feels he cannot hold himself responsible for the future developments the Labour Government may be compelled to accept the logical consequences."

The British decision to quit India before June, 1948 was announced by the British Government on February 20, 1947. The announcement said it was Britain's intention to take necessary steps to effect the transference of power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. It added that if a fully agreed constitution by a representative Assembly had not been worked out before June, 1948 "H. M's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or, in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people".

In regard to Indian states, the British Government said that H. M's Government did not intend to hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any Government of British India. "It is not intended to bring paramountcy system to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power but it is contemplated that for the intervening period the relation of the Crown with individual states may be adjusted by agreement".

The Government also announced the recall of Wavell and the appointment of Lord Mountbatten to succeed him.

The Hindu featured the story in big type and in big headings on the leader page, its most important page and the opening heading was "Britain to quit India by June 1948". The Hindu thought the announcement should have been made a year ago, at the time of the visit of the Cabinet Mission. "That would have made it plain that Britain meant business whereas the policy pursued by the Government of Britain and the plan put forward by the Cabinet Mission alike encouraged the elements that had been acting as a brake on progress to persist in their course. The result has been not only all round demoralisation but the lowering of efficiency in the administration by the strengthening of

those fissiparous tendencies which the Cabinet Mission expressly declared to be harmful to India".

The Hindu said: "Apart from the renewed declaration about quitting India – for which a date has now been set – the latest announcement constitutes a complete torpedoing of the Cabinet Mission's plan. Stripped of all verbiage this (announcement) constitutes a reversal of two basic postulates on which negotiations between Britain and India have proceeded hitherto – that the succession Government in India should not be of Britain's choosing and that it should function under a constitution freely devised by the Indian people as a whole. If as now Britain thinks, there is no prospect of such a constitution emerging within the next 15 months one should have thought that the obvious course for the British Government to follow would be to transfer power to the interim Government by treating it as the successor Government and leaving it to tackle the problem of maintaining peace and administering India with justice and efficiency by securing that overwhelming popular support which alone would enable it to do this. But in Mr. Attlee's statement there is no mention of the interim Government at all. He talks as if the only alternative were to transfer the powers of the Central Government of India either to 'some form of Central Government for British India', or 'in some areas to the existing provincial Governments' or 'in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the people' – the unspoken assumption being the old discredited fiction that Britain has the right to decide 'what is reasonable and in the best interests of India'."

The Hindu added: "However sincere the British Government may be in hoping that the decision it has announced will spur Indians of all parties to make a supreme effort to compose their differences and enable Britain to transfer control to a Government supported by all parties the very fact that it contemplates the possibility in certain circumstances of handing over the powers of the Central Government to a number of separate and mutually independent authorities is bound to strengthen the Muslim League in that intransigence which has proved the chief obstacle to Indian unity."

The Hindu concluded: "We are constrained to say that the latest modification of Britain's plans is not calculated either to promote an agreement in India or to facilitate the rapid and complete transference of power to Indian hands though Britain is committed to relinquishing control on a fixed date. But the harder the task, the greater will be the faith and the quiet perseverance with which India addresses herself to the task of shaping her own destiny."

Congress leaders in Delhi felt that the British decision to quit India completely by June, 1948 and transfer full power by that date to Indian hands had more than met the demand of Pandit Nehru and his colleagues in the interim Government made in their letters to the Viceroy that the League should either quit the interim Government or participate in the work of the Constituent Assembly. The Delhi Correspondent wrote that particular demand had lost almost all its significance now since "H. M.'s Government have announced their decision to quit the Indian scene by a definite date. Congress circles here now hope that a sense of realism will dawn on all groups in the country as also a sense of responsibility in shaping together the future and the great destiny of a free, united India".

One of the factors which impelled the British Government to take the decision to quit India was revealed by Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, in a debate in the House of Lords on February 27. He said "The advice we have received from responsible authorities in India has been that taking all circumstances into account British rule cannot be maintained on its existing basis with adequate efficiency after 1948"

The Prime Minister, Attlee, speaking in the debate in the House of Commons referred to Churchill's opposition and said "We have all to realise how little we know about India and how soon what knowledge we have gets out of date . I recognise that I am out of date on India myself I ended my time in India on the Simon Commission nearly 18 years ago I therefore hesitate to be dogmatic or prophetic as to what may happen in India In this I admit I differ from Mr Churchill I think his practical acquaintance with India ended some 50 years ago He formed very strong opinions – I might almost say prejudices then They have remained with him ever since and I think it is a remarkable example of constancy (laughter) because I have heard him reiterate these views over a period of years with a constancy that completely ignored the march of events. Although he feels deeply on these matters I feel he does not really believe in self-government in India I think he has forced himself to recognise that the steps over many years cannot be entirely retraced I think he still feels that the steps were mistaken and he will not face the logic of the situation" Attlee said "When we took office we did not find India in a very easy state It is a volcano of hidden fires" The Hindu carried the report of the Commons debate on both the days almost verbatim, spread over three pages, Churchill's speech alone occupying five columns

The Hindu reviewing the debate told the British Government that it should realise "there are two things it cannot claim to do consistently with its most solemn declarations. It should not countenance the destruction of the unity of India. And it should not reassert the claim which it definitely abjured when it sent out the Cabinet Mission to judge what settlement would be good for India and impose it on her even if she should demur. The British Government having fixed a date for handing over should hand over to the authority which is actually in existence and which is competent to receive it"

Meanwhile, there were ugly developments in the Punjab, where the Muslim League by a policy of coercion, intimidation and violence had forced the Unionist Coalition Ministry to resign There were widespread disturbances in Lahore and other parts of the state. The situation in Amritsar was described as a "veritable inferno".

The riots and loss of life and property in the Punjab in the wake of the Muslim League agitation led to a historic decision by the Congress Working Committee on March 8, 1947 which laid the foundation for partition. The Committee in a resolution said in view of the tragic events in the Punjab, "it is necessary to find a way out which involves the least amount of compulsion" This, the Committee said, "would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part" The Committee invited the Muslim League to nominate representatives to meet Congress representatives to consider the situation arising out of the British Government's announcement"

The Punjab riots were preplanned according to observers in Delhi (the New Delhi Correspondent said on March 13) and were intended by the League for the capture of power and authority in the north-west zone of Pakistan "The price however has been heavy for the Muslim League. The original intention of the planners of the Direct Action Campaign was to capture the Ministry, then to secure a general election after the dissolution of the Legislature and lastly to establish a stable League Government in the Punjab and in brief to repeat the recent victory in Sind (where the League secured absolute majority in the election to the provincial Assembly). Had that been unfolded according to original design, the drama would have been enacted all over again at Peshawar. But the Sikhs and the Hindus of Punjab have come together in the hour of sorrow and adversity. It is astonishing how men of all classes and groups are determined to face the drastic solution of partition. Recent events in the province have convinced them that the officials and the police cannot guarantee their safety under existing circumstances. They feel convinced that they must part company with the Muslims and seek a division into Muslim and non-Muslim areas. When Pandit Nehru starts conversations with the League as he hopes to do very shortly, they will be on the basis of a divided Punjab and a divided Bengal.

"The Punjab tragedy has thus clarified issues in a remarkable manner. The Congress attitude seems to be: Let us make a start with as many provinces or part of provinces as will hold together; also with such of the states as are prepared to go forward. Simultaneously, a move will be initiated to expedite the work of the Constituent Assembly and work to a time table so that the new constitution may be ready before the end of the year".

The Hindu gave a vivid picture of the happenings in the Punjab: "As the iron curtain that has hid the grim happenings in the Punjab is being lifted, the havoc done there by rabid communalism in the course of a few days is coming to be seen in its proper proportions. Sardar Baldev Singh, who is not likely to speak irresponsibly, has succinctly said that what he has seen puts into the shade the horrors and massacres of Naokhali in Eastern Bengal. The destruction of property in such prosperous cities as Amritsar has been on a colossal scale. The extent of the loss of life is yet to be definitely ascertained but the fiendish cruelty that delights in killing, maiming and forcible conversion seems to have glutted itself without let or hindrance. All responsible sections of opinion but one have expressed horror at these happenings; the top leaders of the Muslim League alone may for all the notice they have taken of the terrible sorrow and suffering be living in a different world".

The Hindu said: "Mr. Jinnah goes on parrot-like intoning his demand for Pakistan, oblivious of the fact that the events of the past six months have once for all destroyed the possibility of that passive acquiescence on the part of non-Muslim minorities which alone would have enabled that chimerical scheme being given so much as a trial. Hardly less significant from this point of view is the recent Congress pronouncement in favour of the partition of the Punjab than the broad hint conveyed by Sir Stafford Cripps in the Commons debate that if in fact the transfer of the Central Government's powers in some areas to the provincial Governments should become necessary, those Governments would not be the present provincial Governments "but the then existing provincial Governments", thus suggesting that Britain might

divide the Punjab and possibly Bengal before considering the question of transfer of power. That would be the end of all hopes of achieving either Pakistan or any other solution by internal agreement. So far as Britain is concerned the Punjab flare up should go far to reinforce the inescapable logic of the situation. If India must go through hell, well, she must. But let it not be Britain's doing. The Central Government she has set up is as genuine a representative of Indian democracy as the popular Governments that are functioning in the provinces. It would be far easier as it could be more natural for her to transfer to that Government the over-riding authority she now exercises than if she were to set about in a hurry rigging up the provincial Governments for the exercise of powers which were never considered in their context."

On March 16, the Dewan of Travancore, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, declared that Travancore would become an independent state on July 1, 1948. He said Travancore was never conquered or overrun by the British. In the final Treaty of friendship in 1805, although the rulers of Travancore conceded certain powers of advice there was no question of conquest or assumption of suzerainty as such. He mentioned that according to the declaration made by the British Government on February 20 there would be no paramountcy after July 1, 1948, even leaving out of account all old treaties. In effect therefore Travancore would become an independent state on July 1, 1948. There were certain intermediate negotiations which had to take place such as cession of Anjengo and Thangassery, adjustments of custom and tariff regulations etc. All these matters would have to be decided subject, it might be, to final arrangements with the succession Government by Travancore acting as an independent entity. Thus at the end of June 1948, Travancore would revert to her status in 1795. The policy of the Travancore Government would be to prepare itself to take up the status and position of an independent kingdom from July 1, 1948. It would necessarily have to enter into treaties with the Government that would come into existence in India in order to regulate matters of joint concern. Because India was one country, one integrally united country, they had always pleaded for the unity of Indian administration. How that unity was to be secured was a matter for a treaty and not dictation, he said.

The Hindu writing on the eve of the departure of Lord Wavell for home said: "He has impressed all who have come into contact with him by his straightforwardness, his absolute lack of 'side' and his genuine desire to promote the interests of the common man. His very first administrative act was to fly to famine stricken Bengal which his predecessor had severely left alone and he gave a vigorous jolt to the administrative machinery and it was this which was largely responsible for arresting the fearful tale of starvation and death. It is a pity that the initiative which he showed then in dealing with an issue of vital importance to the masses, cutting through a maze of legalism and red tape, should have deserted him when communal madness on a colossal scale broke out in Calcutta and East Bengal. It was in this crisis that his lack of political experience and mental resilience became evident. No wonder that these defects were even more conspicuous when he had to act as the interpreter and instrument of the new policy decided upon by the Attlee Government. We do no injustice to Lord Wavell when we say that he who had been bred on Rudyard Kipling and in the traditions of the War Office found himself out of his depths in the strong currents that agitated Indian nationalism. Rightly or

wrongly he has been charged with a strong if unconscious bias in favour of the Muslim League. It must be said that on any other interpretation it is impossible to explain his action in inviting the League to join the interim Government on the strength of an assurance given him by that body of co-operation in the Constituent Assembly and his failure to take any action when the League after coming in flatly refused to abide by its undertaking. Neither by temperament nor by training was Lord Wavell fitted to attempt the task of reconciling a great people embittered by disappointed hopes and unredeemed pledges and subjected to unparalleled suffering and sacrifice in the course of a long war into which they had been forced without their consent. A clean break with the past was what was needed as the Labour Government realised. But Lord Wavell, who as commander-in-chief had stoutly opposed the proposal to give Indians in an interim Government even limited powers over defence, could hardly be expected to reconcile himself easily to the prospect of Britain giving up all control over the affairs of this country within any foreseeable date. With such a man at the helm, the bureaucracy found it as easy as it was tempting to put many obstacles in the way of the early realisation of the proclaimed objective. It was when the effects of this 'go slow' movement began to make themselves unmistakably felt that the British Government must have come to the conclusion that Lord Wavell should be replaced by one who would be more genuinely in accord with their avowed purposes and show more energy in pursuing them."

Lord Mountbatten was sworn in as Viceroy in succession to Lord Wavell on March 24, 1947. The Delhi Correspondent wrote: "The new Viceroy sprang a pleasant surprise on the gathering by making a brief speech at the end of the ceremony. Lord Mountbatten has an easy and pleasant manner and does not suffer from shyness which seemed such a characteristic of Lord Linlithgow and Lord Wavell. There was little perhaps in the substance of the speech which he made but it left behind a strong impression that the Viceroy would lose no time in getting down to business. That he is not wasting time is obvious from the fact that he pressed Pandit Nehru to see him this afternoon despite the latter's preoccupation with the Asian Relations Conference. The process of dismantling the administrative structure as one has known it in the past will shortly commence. For instance the post of the Governor-General's Secretary (Public) now held by Mr. Godbole will be amalgamated with that of the Reforms Commissioner from the end of April, Mr. V. P. Menon being the likely choice for the combined post. It is also considered likely that residencies in Indian states will be dissolved in the course of the next few months. This proposal has given rise to the speculation whether Indian states will be in a position to declare their independence even in advance of June next year. Such speculation has been encouraged by the announcement of Hyderabad's decision to appoint an agent-general in London and the statement by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer on behalf of Travancore outlining the future plans of that state".

The Correspondent drew attention to one significant incident during the swearing in ceremony. He said: "At one stage immediately after the administration of oaths to the Viceroy by the Chief Justice of the Federal Court, the Home Secretary must formally ask the question whether His Excellency would authorise him to notify all military, naval and air stations throughout India, the different departments of the Government of India, states and provincial Governments that Lord Mountbatten had succeeded Lord Wavell as



Viceroy Usually it is regarded as a mere formality, the new Viceroy merely nodding assent in response to questions Lord Mountbatten, however, first turned to the right of the Viceregal dais where sat Pandit Nehru with some of his colleagues, to obtain their permission, having done so he similarly turned to the left where were seated Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, Mr. C Rajagopalachari and some other members of the interim Government Only after securing their consent did he authorise the Home Secretary to take the necessary steps Those who noticed the incident interpreted it as the first indication that Lord Mountbatten will be a constitutional head of the Government"

The Hindu referred to this incident in an editorial under the heading "Our Viceroy" and said "For a brief moment constitutional history was being made It was all reminiscent of another equally important step in the life of men and women which marks the solemn ceremony of their wedding It is true in this case there was more than one bride but they all jointly and severally gave their assent Of no less happy augury is the fact that the two groups in which they sat were mixed ones — which together with the reported compromise over the budget proposals, leads one to hope that they will cease to be a house divided Add to this the inference that Lord Mountbatten will be content to be the constitutional head of the Government and the stage is set for happy ending to British rule in India".

The new Viceroy invited Gandhiji who was touring the riot-affected areas in Bihar to meet him in Delhi Gandhiji was unhappy when a Patna paper reported that he had sent his reply to the Viceroy. He said the report "is packed with half-truths which I always hold are more dangerous than full untruths. Therefore I characterise half-truths as a lie and a half" The Hindu Correspondent who reported this added: "Although Gandhiji declined to say anything in answer to the question put to him, I am in a position to state that he has not sent any reply to the Viceroy"

The Hindu used the story for a dig at the Mahatma. "This episode shows pretty clearly that the crimes of which the politicians too often accuse the Pressmen are sometimes due to the former's unwillingness to release the facts. The Pressman is a very useful medium when a leader wishes to make his views or movements known to the public, he becomes anathema when the leader has something to withhold. This does not mean that the Pressman has a right to a leader's secrets — but he certainly has the right to make guesses when information is denied to him since the public wants to know probabilities as well as fait accomplis".

There was no change in Jinnah's refrain. In a speech in Bombay on March 27 he said: "Let us now call for a truce and let us agree on Pakistan. It is better to divide and be flourishing than to be united as slaves and destroy everything There is no other alternative. United India will only result in destruction Why should there be destruction? The answer is really simple United India can only mean the rule of one nation over another. Therefore one nation with a brute majority cannot rule and inflict its own ideals on another nation"

The Hindu noted that it was not long ago that Jinnah was frantically appealing to the British to stay and divide the country. "He was telling them that if they failed to do this they would be betraying the Muslims who had put their trust in them Now he says: Britain is going. It has to go away".

The Hindu said: "How little Mr. Jinnah can adapt himself to the march of ideas is shown by his studied silence in regard to the formidable challenge that the Congress has by the logic of circumstances been compelled to face him with. The tragic events all over India culminating in the violent outbursts in the Punjab have made it clear that if the League insists on partition it must be prepared for partition all along the way. Mr. Jinnah draws a roseate picture of socialistic Government in the Pakistan of the future under which the minorities will be treated 'justly, fairly and generously'. But he does not let them forget that their status will be that of perpetual minorities whereas the Government under which they will live will be that of the Muslim majority. We are not called upon to follow Mr. Jinnah in his fanciful excursion into history according to which theocracies of Islam rained their beneficence alike on the worthy and the unworthy — the believer and the unbeliever. But Mr. Jinnah who is not willing to live under a Hindu majority can hardly expect Hindus to elect for a like minority status".

As the Viceroy continued his talks with Congress and League leaders, the Hindu members of the Central Assembly and the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee called for the partition of Bengal so that such parts of it which wished to remain in the Indian union could do so.

A Congress spokesman told the Delhi Correspondent on April 8 that it had been made unambiguously clear to the Viceroy that if the British Government was sincere in its intention to quit India, then it must immediately recognise the interim Government as a Cabinet Government. If the Muslim League desired to continue in the interim Government then it must not only agree to the principle of joint responsibility but also enter the Constituent Assembly in accordance with the principles of May 16. "It is almost certain", wrote the Correspondent, "that the Muslim League will decline to accept these two conditions in which case it is felt by Congress leaders the limitations imposed by the Cabinet Mission's proposals on the working of the Constituent Assembly will cease to operate. In other words this would mean that the clauses relating to sections, groups and agreements between parties which have been put in mainly to satisfy the Muslim League will be rendered unnecessary and the Constituent Assembly will be free to draft a constitution unfettered, the only restriction being that the constitution so framed will not be applicable to provinces and areas which do not accept it. Consistent with this interpretation and bearing in mind the British declaration of February 20, that no constitution will be thrust on any unwilling province or area, the Congress Working Committee at its last meeting suggested the division of the Punjab — a principle which could be extended to Bengal as well. This resolution, it is learnt, was adopted after a very careful consideration of several relevant and vital factors. The first and perhaps the most important consideration was the time limit set by the British Government and the anxiety of the Congress to offer a practical solution by which all provinces whether as at present constituted or after division could be enabled to achieve full freedom. A second consideration was the feeling that it would be futile to hope for a settlement with the Muslim League and that the country could not afford to lose time by waiting on the whims and fancies of the League. Another consideration which weighed with the Congress is the attitude of the League leaders towards communal troubles in Bengal and the

Punjab Whereas Congress leaders including Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru exercised all their influence in restoring immediate order in Bihar and compelled Hindus to atone for their conduct, not one single responsible League leader has so far publicly condemned the Naokhali atrocities and the Punjab massacre. This has naturally aroused the fears of non-Muslims and led to the demand by Hindus and Sikhs for a division of Punjab and Bengal so as to constitute predominantly non-Muslim areas into separate provinces. The Congress could not obviously ignore the widespread feeling by non-Muslims in Punjab and Bengal and hence the resolution. If Mr. Jinnah insisted on division of the country then by the same token it seems inevitable that Bengal and Punjab should also be divided. Congress leaders feel that even if Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League persist in their present policy the British Government should not hesitate to proceed with their plan for transfer of full power and recognise the authority of the Central Government over Congress provinces plus West Bengal and East Punjab".

The Hindu indicated the hard choice before Jinnah when it wrote on April 16: "The Congress has all along been consistent in saying that it will not coerce or be a party to coerce any province or part of a province into doing something against its will. In the context of the accepted decision to form an Indian Union this will mean that the non-Muslim areas in the Punjab and Bengal will automatically go into the Union. It is the Muslim areas that will have to contract out and if they do so they must be prepared for the eventuality that any attempt on their part to get together to form a separate union of their own or to enter into a treaty of alliance with the Indian union may be rendered infructuous by the latter's refusal to negotiate on the basis of two different unions. The assumption behind the League's carefully undefined demand for Pakistan has been that the League could get that vague demand conceded first and then put pressure on Britain to get the Indian Union to make all the adjustments that would be needed to give reality to the existence of Pakistan as a separate state. If Britain cannot, as the Muslim League says, coerce the Muslims to remain in a united India, neither can she, with logic or justice make stipulations in favour of Pakistan which the Indian Union may be unwilling to agree to".

Jinnah found it increasingly difficult to control his impatient followers. This was the impression The Hindu's Correspondent in Delhi got from reports received from Shillong, Calcutta, Peshawar and Ambala. "A number of Bengal Muslim League M.L.A.s told Mr. Jinnah that they would, if allowed, enter the Constituent Assembly. Mr. (H.S.) Suhrawardhy is making a last desperate attempt to prevent partition of the province. Yesterday he gave a most remarkable Press conference. I have culled certain gems which he dropped in the course of his remarks and have strung them below. Mr. Suhrawardhy said: 'We Bengalees have a common mother tongue and common economic interests. Bengal has very little affinity with the Punjab. Bengal will be an independent state and decide by herself later whether she would link up with Pakistan'."

"At one stage", the Correspondent wrote, "I thought of the brilliant though bloodcurdling speech he had delivered here in Delhi precisely a year ago, threatening the Hindus with whom he said 'Muslims had absolutely nothing in common, with dire consequences ("Pakistan is only our latest demand")'. 'Do you remember that speech', I asked him. He gave me a long and embarrassed look. 'I don't remember what I said then, but it was only a speech and one year

is a long time, isn't it?', he asked laughingly. He does not any more subscribe to Mr. Jinnah's conception of Pakistan."

For the first time on May 2, Jinnah came out with a statement criticising the proposal to partition Punjab and Bengal. He said it was a "sinister move actuated by spite and bitterness as they feel India is going to be divided."

Replying to him Dr. Rajendra Prasad said: "If there is going to be a division of India, then it should be as complete and thorough as possible, including the division of the Punjab and Bengal so that there might be no room left for contention or conflict".

The Hindu also replied to Jinnah: "Clever lawyer as he is the distinction Mr. Jinnah tries to make between the demand for Pakistan and the demand for the division of the two provinces is a distinction without difference. If Mr. Jinnah were only anxious to secure a fair degree of homogeneity in the political units which he is ambitious of bringing into Pakistan he should see that it would be far simpler and more practicable to exchange populations from one part of a province to another than from one end of India to another. From this point of view the division of the Punjab and Bengal should commend itself to those who are anxious that if there must be any kind of division and consequent large-scale movement of population, those things should be done with the minimum of hardship and the maximum of consent on the part of the population affected. If the idea does not appeal to Mr. Jinnah it is because he is not so much concerned to secure self-determination for the Muslims as to give them a sovereign state to rule and a subject people over whom they could exercise authority. He seems to realise that the determined opposition of the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab and of the Hindus in Bengal may foil his designs. And so he threatens to put forward a counter-claim for similarly cutting up other provinces where the Muslims are in a minority. Such a claim would be a glorious caricature of the idea of division of which he is the fond parent. But the empty threat will not frighten anybody. . . It is plain that Mr. Jinnah fears that he may be hoist with his own petard. Why then should he not frankly admit his mistake?"

As the political crisis continued it resulted in the demoralisation of the services in the Delhi Secretariat which was aggravated with the entry of the Leaguers into the interim Government. "Senior British Officers", the New Delhi Correspondent wrote, "who are taking leave preparatory to retirement view with dismay the sacrifice of all principles in making appointments. One who has just gone said: 'I cannot bear to see a system built up with so much labour crumbling before one's eyes'. Another, who is just going, declared: 'Of course, I won't be here next month, but who can justify these appointments?' (referring to a number of them made in his department)

"The fact is there has been for sometime a Pakistan section of the Government of India in action. Non-Muslim officials must not expect standards evolved over so many years to be applied if their application means that a junior Muslim official cannot, by-passing claims of his seniors, get some post he wants. Protest is useless. A League member of the interim Government frankly told an aggrieved official who had the courage to protest, though administratively he could not justify a particular appointment — needless to say a Muslim junior had jumped over many non-Muslim seniors — it was in pursuance of a definite political programme. Such instances are not rare.

Unfortunately Congress members of the interim Government are too preoccupied with party or political developments to afford any time for looking into this aspect of the administration"

A last minute attempt by Gandhiji to placate Jinnah by offering to vest in him the entire administration of the country failed to produce any result. The Gandhi-Jinnah meeting took place in New Delhi on the initiative of the Viceroy on May 6. The talks lasted two and half hours. Gandhiji's offer was reported by the Bombay Correspondent who said that Gandhiji told Jinnah that instead of a part of India as demanded by the Muslim League he could have the whole of India. He (Jinnah) could reconstitute the Central Government with League members without the Congress if he could go and tell Lord Mountbatten that both of them had reached an agreement and that the British Government should quit India immediately. Gandhiji, according to the Correspondent, added that the Congress would give Mr. Jinnah every co-operation that he wanted. Gandhiji pinned his faith on the ideal of a united India. Mr. Jinnah declined to accept Gandhiji's offer to make him the "Rajtilak of India". Mr. Jinnah was fully aware, said the Correspondent, that though the Congress Working Committee differed from Gandhiji on this offer yet the latter would be able to bring them round but he was firmly of the opinion that he would be a "prisoner" in the hands of the Hindu majority. He would be only perpetuating Hindu raj and repudiating the entire League movement. Perhaps he felt, the Correspondent said, that the Pakistan cry had been carried too far to cry halt to it now.

H. S. Suhrawardhy, Premier of Bengal, about whose Press Conference opposing Pakistan and favouring an independent Bengal we have already mentioned, in an interview to the Delhi Correspondent on May 7 said: "United Bengal has a bright future. But Bengal divided into bits will represent a picture of despair and ruin for all". Giving his interpretation of the two-nation theory he said: "The demand for partition of India and some provinces arose out of a sense of frustration and exasperation to which Muslims and Hindus have been driven by past events. The two-nation theory has had as its background mainly political considerations. But there are other considerations such as common language, economic ties, inter-dependence, ethnological and historical, which are of immediate importance and which directly affect people in any particular area. There has been no finality even among eminent professors of politics of what constituted a nation and different criteria would furnish different answers. Therefore the two-nation theory should be fully capable of being suitably moulded as to be acceptable to local traditions as the situation demanded". Suhrawardhy was asked what he would suggest to allay fears of Hindus in Bengal. He said: "I for one have always held that power should be shared by Hindus and Muslims and I would like to agree to interim arrangements on these lines". Will Bengal agree to join the Indian Union, he was asked. He replied: "On all vital matters affecting Bengal and the Indian union in common it should be possible to come to some understanding or arrangement call it treaty or, what you will".

As Lord Mountbatten left for home on May 18, 1947, for consultations with H. M.'s Government Gandhiji vigorously voiced his opposition to any kind of partition of India. He wanted the British Government to implement its May 16 proposals and quit. And he was fully supported by The Hindu

The New Delhi Correspondent tried to read the future in a dispatch in which he said: "The impression is gaining ground in informed circles that with suitable amendments to the Government of India Act, 1935, the present interim Government may be transformed into a Federal Government responsible to the Federal legislature. The division of the Punjab and Bengal for administrative purposes will probably be carried out, the contiguous districts with Hindu and Muslim majorities being formed as separate zones. Details regarding the boundaries may be referred to an impartial tribunal and, if need be, the assistance of the U.N. may be sought. This will mean that Calcutta will remain in West Bengal and Sylhet in Assam will go to East Bengal. Some form of ascertaining the wishes of the people may be evolved and put into operation. The provinces will be free to secede from the Federation, probably when the British quit India in June next year. The Muslim Leaguers will thus have one year's experience of what Pakistan is and how it works before deciding whether to remain in the Indian union or prefer complete independence"

Echoing Gandhiji's opinion expressed at his prayer meeting in Delhi that Britain should simply quit India leaving it to Indians to decide on a united or divided India, The Hindu pointed out that the Cabinet Mission was definitely opposed to the division of India from the point of view of India's future progress and of international security alike. The Mission had recommended safeguards in a united India which it considered should fully satisfy the Muslims' legitimate ambitions. "The League has repudiated the Mission's scheme. The British Government should in the circumstances consider its responsibility fully discharged and hand over power to the Government representative of all parties which it has set up. It is no part of its business to go on devising alternative after alternative in the vain hope that the League would be appeased. . . . Gandhiji is right in urging that it is no part of Britain's function 'to change the map of India' and that she may help all parties in this country to think coherently and to act in purposeful co-operation, by relinquishing her authority at once and without reserve into the hands of the popular Indian Government".

Gandhiji said at his prayer meeting on May 29: "Let the whole of India declare with one voice that Britain should implement its proposals of May 16 and quit. Let Indians resolve that they shall not give an inch of territory or make any concession to violence. Everything will then be well". Quoting these words The Hindu said. "Gandhiji has thus declared his uncompromising opposition to any further weakening of the Congress' attitude at Britain's behest. It is to be hoped that the Viceroy and his principals will be warned by this unmistakable indication of the temper of the country and will see that it would be prudent of Britain not to involve herself more and more inextricably in a tangle which she has woefully failed to unravel".

Earlier, The Hindu pointed out that by its policy Britain was most likely to create a vacuum in India by the endless wobbling that it had displayed "unless by a miracle there is a change at the last moment". The Hindu added: "A divided India must bid farewell to peace and she may easily become a menace to the peace of the world which is precarious enough in all conscience".

The Delhi Correspondent on May 31 quoted Gandhiji as telling the Congress Working Committee that it should take its stand on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's proposals. At his prayer meeting Gandhiji again reiterated his

determination not to yield to force. Even if the entire country was burnt to ashes, he declared, he would not concede Pakistan. Mr. Jinnah must first enter the Constituent Assembly and once the provinces went into sections it was quite open to him to allay the fears and suspicions of Assam and the Frontier Province and persuade them to group with Bengal and Punjab.

Unfortunately Gandhiji's views were not to prevail and the Congress, as also the Muslim League, on June 3 told the Viceroy that they accepted the proposals of the British Government for the partition of India. The scene in the Congress Working Committee was described by the Delhi Correspondent: "The Congress Working Committee met here today and considered H.M.'s Government's proposals for the transfer of power. In the afternoon session, Gandhiji watched the proceedings in silence as it was his weekly day of silence. In the night session it is believed Gandhiji who also had met the Viceroy in the afternoon told the Committee that he remained an unrepentant supporter of the Cabinet Mission's plan of May 16, though it was not even so much as mentioned by the Viceroy today. But as the Working Committee almost unanimously favoured the scheme of partition it is unlikely that Gandhiji would press his view to breaking point".

On June 3, 1947, the British Government's plan for partition of India was announced and the date for ushering in of the two new Dominions of India and Pakistan was advanced to August 15, 1947. Broadcasts were made to the country by the Viceroy and the Congress and League leaders. The Hindu was unhappy about partition. It wrote. "The plan of partition announced by the British Government contains few elements of surprise. But that will not the more easily reconcile the people of India to the division of the country in spite of the fact that the plan has been accepted by the Congress, the Muslim League and the Sikhs".

The Hindu pointed out that under the scheme there would still be substantial minorities in each of the two halves of Punjab and Bengal and added: "The minority problem will thus by no means be solved automatically. It might indeed become much more intractable because the minorities who would be separated by the partition from the bulk of their co-religionists in the parent province would feel their lot more keenly". The Hindu said: "The British Government's announcement proceeds on the assumption that for the British provinces there are only two courses open — either to join the existing Constituent Assembly or to enter a new and separate Constituent Assembly of the representatives of those areas which decide not to participate in the existing Constituent Assembly. We are unable to see why a third alternative should have been tacitly ruled out". The Hindu then referred to the position of the North-West Frontier Province and the demand of its leaders, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Khan Saheb, for freedom to form an independent Pathan state and said: "Far from giving serious consideration to this demand... the British power has gone out of its way to prescribe for the Frontier a mode of choice as to the side with which it will align itself in the future which is different from what has been prescribed for the other Muslim majority provinces". The Hindu asked: "If a referendum must be held in the Frontier because it formed not long ago part of the Punjab of which a part is now expected to break away from the existing Constituent Assembly, should not a referendum be held, by a

parity of reasoning, for Sind which not long ago was part of Bombay, a province which will continue in the existing Constituent Assembly"

The Hindu said: "The position of the Indian states under the new plan remains as nebulous as ever" It expressed the fear that some of the states which had been given freedom to join the Dominion of their choice, might join the Muslim Dominion in the hope of retaining their connection intact with the British Crown which their rulers had long professed to value "In that event Britain might find once again, as so often before, saddled with the responsibilities of a new Empire assumed in a fit of absent-mindedness. Can it be this hope that has reconciled Mr Churchill (at all events on the surface) to the new plan for which he has promised easy passage in Parliament?"

The Hindu said: "We should like to say that the Indian people too have from their own viewpoint been anxious to secure a settlement which would be based on full agreement among all the major elements in the country It is this consideration that has weighed with the Congress all through and it is in the trust that such a settlement has at long last been found that its latest decision to accept a plan which has many unsatisfactory features, has apparently been taken. So far as India's future relations with Britain are concerned, Mr. Nehru has said this country would 'seek relations with England on a friendly or co-operative basis forgetting the past' But overriding every other consideration is the fact that the people will judge this plan by its fruits If it gives India the reality of independence forthwith, if it is faithfully worked out on the basis, agreed to by all parties concerned, that so far as the external world is concerned India shall be regarded as one and no outside power however benevolent shall come between one part of India and another or be allowed to claim greater priority of interest with one or the other, the plan may succeed; indeed that will be the hope of all lovers of this great land But if the plan is sought to be made an instrument for promoting balkanisation or cultural and religious antagonism it will fail".

In his broadcast to the nation announcing Congress acceptance of the partition plan, Jawaharlal Nehru used these words "It is with no joy in my heart that I commend these proposals to you though I have no doubt in my mind that this is the right course. For generations we have dreamt and struggled for a free and independent India The proposal to allow certain parts to secede if they so will is painful for any of us to contemplate Nevertheless, I am convinced that our present decision is the right one even from the larger viewpoint The united India that we have laboured for was not one of compulsion and coercion but a free and willing association of a free people It may be that in this way we shall reach that united India sooner than otherwise and that she will have a stronger and more secure foundation".

Lord Mountbatten said in his broadcast. "Nothing I have seen or heard in the past few weeks has shaken my firm opinion that with a reasonable measure of goodwill between the communities a unified India would be by far the best solution of this problem"

There was all round relief in Congress circles, the Delhi Correspondent reported and "hope is entertained by many Congress leaders including Pandit Nehru that the strain and tension through which the country has been passing in the last few months will soon give way to a calm and friendly atmosphere. This feeling of optimism is not shared by others, including socialists like,



J P Narayan who expressed the misgiving that real trouble lies ahead when the plan is implemented. There are leaders who apprehend that the situation in Calcutta might deteriorate and visualise difficulties when the Boundary Commission commences its task and a referendum is taken."

The Muslim League Council accepted the partition plan on June 9 "as a compromise". The Delhi Correspondent said, "Although privately one heard prominent Bengal Muslim Leaguers opposing vehemently the partition of their province, Sind Leaguers swearing that they would never accept domination by Punjabi Muslims and Punjabi Muslims fearing the possibility of having to find money to run the Frontier Province and tribal areas, not one of the leading Leaguers raised a voice of protest."

The All India Congress Committee ratified the decision of the Working Committee to accept the Plan on June 15 by 157 votes to 29. Gandhi told the members that although he himself was unhappy over the partition plan he thought world opinion would go against them if they did not lend support to the decision taken by the leaders whom they themselves had put in power. It was quite open to the A.I.C.C. to reject the scheme and dismiss the Working Committee. That would mean a revolution and A.I.C.C. members would plunge the country into a state of revolution at this stage. It was again within their power to provoke a revolution if they thought that the country was with them. Out of evil, good too, would come, Gandhi said.

The Hindu wrote the Partition Plan "is a compromise dictated by the urgency of the occasion and the impossibility of further postponement of a fresh and real start on the road to the freedom and unity of India. Unlike the previous plan this is one on which the Congress and the League are agreed at least in its fundamental principles. Whether it will open the way to a final settlement will depend on the extent to which the spirit of agreement continues to prevail during the working out of the details. It is a bitter pill — only less bitter to one party than to the other, but if it cures the malaise it will have been worth taking".

The problem of the North-West Frontier Province was yet to be solved and The Hindu criticised the attitude of the Congress leaders in leaving the people there to decide for themselves what to do even to the extent of permitting Congressmen to abstain from the referendum. The Delhi Correspondent had written: "There is reason to believe that the North-West Frontier Congress may not participate in the coming referendum. This does not however mean that some settlement has been reached between Mr. Jinnah and Badshah Khan yesterday. Mr. Jinnah according to reports was nowhere near a mood to compromise even though he knew the Congress leader's aim was to prevent the area being plunged into bloodshed. Congress leaders would desire full internal autonomy for the Frontier Province with freedom to federate with Pakistan or the Indian Union after the two constitutions have been drafted. It is believed that Mr. Jinnah stuck to the agreed proposal contained in the June 3 statement and invited the Frontier Muslims to join the Pakistan Constituent Assembly".

The Hindu criticising the Congress leaders "for agreeing to limit the choice before the Pathans to one of joining Pakistan or the Indian Union" and "thereby practically acting over the head of the Khan brothers who have kept the province within the Congress and Indian political orbit against innumer-

able odds", said: "Surely the Congress leaders knew that for the vast majority of the people of the frontier the alternative to continuing in the Indian Union was not Pakistan but self-rule independent of either; in this view the least they owed to the Khan Brothers was to leave them alone and free to make their terms with the departing power. By washing their hands of the whole affair at this late stage (which is what their reported decision to leave the decision on the question of participation in the referendum to the Frontier Ministry amounts to) they have solved nothing; indeed they lay themselves open to the charge of acquiescing in a virtual breach of one of the terms of the June 3 agreement. Nor could the boycott of the referendum be expected to repair the damage; if anything it will make the position worse from the point of view of those who believe that an overwhelming majority are against Pakistan, by giving a walk over to the League. In the circumstances it is not surprising that the Frontier leaders apparently with the full backing of their followers should have plumped for a third alternative, namely, Pathanistan".

The Hindu praised Britain for its voluntary relinquishment of power when it commented on the Indian Independence Bill introduced in the British Parliament on July 7, 1947. "The Indian Independence Bill which provides for the formal termination of British rule in India is a historic measure which crowns with success the half-a-century-old struggle for national freedom. And as an act of voluntary relinquishment of power for which there are few precedents, it redounds greatly to the credit of Britain's sagacity and statesmanship and it is bound to enhance her prestige among the nations. But while British control goes, the British connection remains. We are not primarily thinking of the constitutional link furnished by Dominion Status which may be broken at will. But any arrangement for the external defence of India which regarded it as part of the scheme of international security in East Asia would bring Britain into the picture because of the still large interests she has in this part of the world. Even more important, the political arrangements within the country which she has effected as a preliminary to her relinquishing control are of such a character that British policy in the future may be faced with opportunities and temptations to intervene in India's affairs which must be resolutely resisted if Britain wants to retain India's goodwill".

The Hindu referred to the position of states under the bill and said there was no "inescapable necessity for Britain's decision, embodied in the present bill, to terminate the political connection that has subsisted between British India on the one hand and the states on the other". It added: "Except for the standstill agreement in regard to customs, communications etc. which is provided for in the bill, the relations between the new Dominions and the states are left hanging in the air".

The Hindu said. "British statesmen have been expressing the hope that the states would join one or the other of the new Dominions. But what can such pious wishes hope to effect in the face of encouragement given by British policy to such a course as Hyderabad and Travancore have plumped for? . . . The vast majority of the Indian States are placed cheek by jowl with those parts of India which form the new Indian Dominion; and their affairs and interests are inextricably tied with it. To give these states the option to link themselves with Pakistan could serve no conceivable purpose; if any state should be ill-advised enough to exercise that option it cannot but make for disharmony. All these

disquieting possibilities could, have been avoided if the British Government had merely confined itself to the task of giving the Muslim League what it wanted — a separate state for the Muslims — leaving the rest of India to remain as it has long been a political unity. This it could have done, by adopting the suggestions put forward by the Congress that the whole of India should first be constituted into a Dominion out of which a new Dominion, Pakistan, could be carved. It has never been claimed that in the process of forming Pakistan, India's status as an international entity should be abrogated or that the country should be resolved into numerous bits which should then enter the orbit of one or the other of the two new Dominions. Till June 3 it was tacitly assumed that for such purposes as defence and external affairs India should continue to be one or at least that the two Dominions should enter into organic arrangements with each other which would ensure a common policy in these matters. Neither the Dominion of India nor the Dominion of Pakistan can afford to carry the idea of mutual independence so far as to enter into closer relations with other foreign states or give preference to their claims and interests. The Indian Independence Bill should have provided constitutional sanction for the retention unimpaired of this priority of relationship between the two new states. That it does not do this is perhaps its greatest defect."

The Delhi Correspondent wrote on July 6 "On August 15 there will be two Dominion governments in India. The question is raised whether on August 15 the Pakistan government will be in Delhi or whether it would have been moved to Karachi. It is quite possible that Mr. Jinnah might resent the idea of the Pakistan Government existing on Indian soil on the very day of its birth. If the Pakistan government is shifted to Karachi immediately, there will be practical difficulty in the way of the Pakistan government functioning properly without informatory files and other essential materials. What is likely to happen is that the Pakistan government might appoint liaison officers for each department until the division is completed. The whole thing is being rushed at such breakneck speed that no one seems to have time to think of the consequences of anything that is being done now. The original intention of the British government was to quit by June, 1948. The date has been advanced by 10 months. Obviously nothing could be examined with anything like thoroughness in such a short interval. A number of standstill agreements must be reached between India and Pakistan within the next few weeks as regards communications and several financial and economic matters. Within the next five weeks the people of India must secure passports to go to Lahore or Karachi. Another complication must be faced if states declare their independence. This would make even normal life difficult especially when the country is on the verge of a food crisis".

On July 10, 1947, Prime Minister Attlee announced in the House of Commons that Lord Mountbatten would be the first Governor-General of free India and Jinnah of Pakistan. He said the names were recommended by the Congress and League leaders respectively. The Delhi Correspondent wrote, "The announcement that Mr. Jinnah will be the first Governor-General of Pakistan has come as a complete surprise. What is not clear is whether it is a surprise to the Congress members of the interim Government also who had recommended Lord Mountbatten as Governor-General for India. A couple of days ago it was thought even by those who are in the know of things that there would be one

Governor-General, at any rate until the Pakistan Constituent Assembly met and took a decision on the question. But now an extraordinary exception has been made by the British Government in the case of the Muslim League. Constitutional procedures in the strict observance of which Britain always prided herself have been temporarily set aside to satisfy the demands of the Muslim League. The Congress probably under the impression that there will be one Governor-General recommended the name of Mountbatten. When the question was again put to them whether they would recommend his name even if Pakistan desired to have a separate Governor-General, Congress members must have found it very delicate to resile from their previous recommendation. It does not appear to have struck anyone that the Muslim League would propose some one other than an Englishman as the Governor-General. Hence the present awkward situation".

"He was a dull member of Parliament who did not feel the very pulse of history breaking in the Commons to-day", wrote the Manchester Guardian on July 10 (which was reproduced by The Hindu by special arrangement). "Here was Mr. Clement Attlee at the dispatch box moving the second reading of the Bill that gives India — true a divided India — its complete freedom nearly 200 years after the formation of the East India Company and 173 years after Warren Hastings became the first Governor-General — a freedom conveyed as both Mr. Attlee and Mr. Macmillan (Conservative opposition) emphasised, by a voluntary surrender of power unique in history. If the shades of statesmen and Proconsuls do revisit Westminster there ought to have been a cloud of immaterial witnesses of to-day's proceedings from Clive and Warren Hastings to Curzon and Reading. Mr. Attlee himself was entitled to feel happy. He likened the present bill to the gift of self-government to the Boers, but he was too modest, of course, to say what is fairly obvious, that there is a fair promise that he himself may hold the place in the history of India that Mr. Campbell Bannerman does in that of South Africa. If all goes well in India, his direction of British policy in the final phase of the connection should certainly win him that reward. It would not have been easy for anyone to improve on the substance of his speech to-day and especially the historic retrospect and the narrative of the slow but steady march of British policy towards the long proclaimed goal of Indian self-Government. Some, he said, in the one controversial note he struck, had called the present policy abdication. 'It is not abdication', retorted Mr. Attlee amid Labour cheers, 'it is the fulfilment of the British mission'. But it was not the substance of the speech that was good. All Mr. Attlee's quiet sincerity went into the speech and sincerity has never yet failed to impose its own form so that Mr. Macmillan could warmly compliment him on both the lucidity and dignity of his speech".

The Hindu carried Attlee's speech almost verbatim and a detailed report of other speeches, the whole occupying two pages of about 11 columns.

**A**T 4 30 P.M. on Friday, July 18, 1947, the King's assent was given to the Indian Independence Bill creating the two Dominions of India and Pakistan.

The Hindu wrote on the historic event. "At 4 o'clock on Friday evening the Royal Assent was given to the Indian Independence Bill. After a century of storm and stress the ship of Indian freedom has come into port. Battered heavily by wind and tide, scarred and seamed in many a fierce encounter with embattled hosts, she has suffered grievous losses and has had to jettison much precious cargo. She is not spick and span as we had pictured her in the morning-time of our hopes. It is on the whole a sad home-coming. There are treacherous shoals about and the pilot is more than a little weary. But she is a brave little ship for all that, for she carries the high hopes and ambitions of 400 millions. On her proud mast-head there broods, like the spirit of peace, the white soul of India. Though the British Parliament has created two states India is one and will be one as she has always been one. The political unity and administrative uniformity that came in the wake of the British conquest has passed along with it. It need not have happened if greater patience and forbearance could have been shown on both sides. If the British had displayed greater imagination and if frustration had not been allowed to blight the ardours of many a generous heart the division of India, which is as much repugnant to reason as it is harrowing to the feelings, might never have come about. But partition is a tragic fact. India embarks on the endless adventure of freedom crippled and maimed in the sight of the world. She is however a great believer in the healing touch of time and in the magic of natural affinities. As the political passions of the day die down, and the little things that divide diminish to their natural stature in the vista of the years to come, the notes of the multi-toned harmony which is India will swell once again to a rich diapason. No political boundary, no difference of creed, no bitterness from the past can withstand the pervasive and gracious influence of the genius of this land — its grave regard for abiding values, its faith in tolerance, its resolve to walk in the ways of righteousness. The future may conceivably see the blunder of the past undone. It may restore a united Indian polity based on reconciliation and voluntary co-operation. At any rate it is a legitimate aspiration; even the British Prime Minister has said his country would look forward hopefully to such a development and welcome it gladly. We are sure that even those who

have been so keen on a division of India know in their heart of hearts that a divided India is a weakened India, weakened not only in material defence but in her ability to be a power for good among the nations. It is to be fervently hoped that this will all the more readily induce them to offer ungrudging co-operation in the strenuous practical tasks that must be wisely tackled before the shell of freedom can become clothed with flesh and blood. At this solemn hour of parting let us not harden our hearts against each other, to do so would be to deny our common heritage."

In a proclamation on July 18, following the King's assent to the Indian Independence Bill, the Maharaja of Travancore announced the Independence of his state. The proclamation was the culmination of the attitude all along adopted by the State's Dewan, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer. Gandhiji had criticised his stand at his prayer meeting in Delhi in June when he said if a referendum were taken in Travancore the Christians as well as the Hindus, not excluding untouchables, would vote against Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer's "strange idea of independent Travancore" in which he hugged the suzerainty of the British but rejected the suzerainty of the Union of the people of India. If Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer was unable to appreciate his appeal and arguments he hoped the other princes would recognise the obvious wisdom of making common cause with the people of India including the people of the states.

The Hindu, which had crossed swords with the Dewan so often, appealed to him to give up his attitude. It said on June 19 "The existing relationship between the States and the British Indian successor Government must, if absurd and dangerous consequences are to be avoided, be construed to continue till they are replaced by freshly negotiated relationship. Anyone who seeks to repudiate or ignore the present relationship will do so at his peril, no matter whether the party be the state or British India".

The Hindu after quoting Prof. A. Keith for the view that states had been brought into "inextricable relations of unity" with British India through the establishment of roads, telephones, currency and commerce, asked, "Can Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer working in self-stultifying isolation as the untiring protagonist of the independence of states, tomorrow in virtue of the independence which he claims for Travancore, ask the British Indian post or telegraph offices to be closed or order the winding up of branches of companies registered in British India? Will he stop the operation of the Trivandrum Express and other through railway and other communications or declare the Indian currency no more legal tender in the State? If he will not do these things and if on the other hand he will as a practical statesman allow the established relationship to continue without detracting from the status of independence which he envisages for the State, what difficulty is there for him in joining the Constituent Assembly and bettering these relationships in the future as a result of joint discussions between the representatives of the states and of British India? Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer should remember in this connection that the sovereignty of few modern states will stand the test of Austinian definition. The derogation from the status of independence which relationship between the state and the Indian Union on the basis of the suggestions thrown in by the Cabinet Mission's Plan involves, can be no more than that which the present treaty and other arrangements which even Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer dare not repudiate, imply. The only difference between the method he suggests and the

country as a whole favours is that under Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer's plan the British Indian Union should after establishing its authority make humble overtures to the Dewan of Travancore when he will graciously accommodate and negotiate a treaty with the Union on the basis, of course, of the state's independence whatever the latter term may mean. The Dewan of Travancore blissfully ignores the practical difficulty involved in this course. When can an agreement be arrived at on the basis of the British Indian Government negotiating individually with every one of the 600 or so states over every detail concerning Union subjects? In view of these circumstances and in view of the fact that the Dewan has not mentioned one single concrete disadvantage which Travancore will suffer by participation, we still hope Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer will advise His Highness to permit the state to join the Assembly."

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer replied to *The Hindu* in a letter in which he said "I would invite you to send any representative of yours to Travancore so as to realise for himself the intensity and the pervasive character of the enthusiastic response that has been evoked to the call of H H the Maharaja and his Government for the declaration of Travancore's independence. I am literally receiving dozens of unsolicited telegrams and letters every hour of the day from persons of all communities and classes pledging their support to this cause. I am myself positive that the Travancore State Congress will hesitate to ask for a referendum. I am not and shall not be afraid of a referendum but I am confident that the problem will solve itself much more easily. In all likelihood and judging from my correspondence, most members of the State Congress will soon declare themselves in favour of the independence of Travancore and will probably resign from the State Congress on this issue".

Things were however to take a different course and within a month Travancore had acceded to the Indian Union. On July 25 there was an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer as he was leaving the Swati Thirunal Music Academy in Trivandrum which was celebrating its centenary. He was attacked with a swordstick by an assailant who was lying in wait for him and jumped on him as the Dewan was about to step into his car. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer was injured severely especially on the face. He was removed to hospital. The Trivandrum Correspondent, Krishnaswami, said that the Private Secretary to the Dewan, Chidambaram, parried the first blow but the assailant pushed him aside and dealt four more blows on the Dewan in a matter of a few seconds and escaped by mixing in the large crowd which had assembled to hear the concert held in connection with the centenary. The Dewan, who fainted, was immediately treated in hospital. The Correspondent added: "The attack was made when the lights were on but immediately after the lights went off for a few seconds and then came back and again went off for another few seconds after which they remained burning. The failure of the lights whether by design or accident afforded an opportunity for the assailant to escape".

The Hindu deplored the attack and said: "Violence as a means of deciding political argument is alien to all notions of freedom and civilisation and is particularly repugnant to India where a long line of teachers from the Buddha to the Mahatma has taught us the sanctity and significance of human life. It is fortunate that the injuries inflicted on Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer are not serious and we trust that he will make an early and complete recovery"

Soon after, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer resigned as Dewan and the Trivandrum Correspondent reported some time later "As a result of negotiations and discussions that have taken place recently in Delhi between the Viceroy and the Dewan of Travancore, H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore, it is understood, has decided to accede to the Indian Union, subject to certain conditions, in respect of defence, foreign affairs and communications".

And the next we hear of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer is in December, 1947 when a New Delhi message dated December 6 said: "Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer arrived here today and is staying with Sardar Patel (who was in-charge of States). He is seeing Mahatma Gandhi tomorrow and is expected to return to Ootacamund the next day". So ended the brief drama of an independent Travancore.

The man who really brought round the princes to join the Indian Union was Lord Mountbatten who failed only in the case of Hyderabad. On July 25, he addressed a meeting of over 100 princes and their representatives in Delhi and urged them to sign the instrument of accession to India. "The Viceroy, it is understood, made a deep impression on the princes and ministers", the Delhi Correspondent reported, "by his frank speech and yet more outspoken replies to questions, expressed in the spirit of a true friend of the states. The note of urgency in the Viceroy's speech and his warning that there might be none to protect or even to advise them after August 15, according to those who attended the Conference had not been lost on his listeners. He seems to have emphasised that the rulers must take a decision within a week so that subsequent arrangements could be made before August 15. There were those who put questions with a view to getting the Viceroy to agree to postpone a decision by the princes to a later date. These got no encouragement from the Viceroy but only a warning that after August 15 he would not be there to protect and advise them and if any one of them chose to remain outside the Dominion after August 15 he could only say to them: God help you, God bless you".

The Hindu described Mountbatten's way with the princes as the "Mountbatten steam roller". And it quoted his own words to tell its readers how the steam roller worked. Mountbatten told the princes. "As you all know it took three years to separate Burma from India in spite of the fact (as I can testify, as also H.H. of Bundi and others) that there are no roads running between India and Burma. Nevertheless, it took three years to arrange that partition. It took two years to separate the province of Sind from Bombay. It took two years to separate the province of Orissa from Bihar. Gentlemen, we decided that in less than two and half months we shall have to go through the partitioning of one of the biggest countries in the world with 400 million inhabitants. There was a reason for that speed. I was quite certain that while British overlordship remained, no satisfactory conclusions could be reached psychologically between the parties. So once we got the two Governments set up and separated they would be able to try and finish off the details in an atmosphere of goodwill".

But the Nizam of Hyderabad alone, among Indian princes, chose to remain out of the Indian Union and on August 12, the Hyderabad Correspondent said: "The Hyderabad Government have definitely decided not to sign the instrument of accession to the Indian Union and will negotiate treaties with both the



Dominions on a footing of equality. The Nizam has addressed a lengthy letter to the Viceroy explaining the position of Hyderabad”.

It required a “Police Action” under another Governor-General to get the Nizam see sense.

In a tribute to Mountbatten The Hindu wrote: “Whatever history may have to say on the merits of the particular procedure by which Britain effected transference of power to the people of India, we have no doubt that it will give Lord Mountbatten a high place among those Britishers who have deserved well of both countries. He is entitled to all credit for the frankness and courage with which he faced the jungle of difficulties and the resoluteness with which he hacked a way through them. He was a hustler and he has explained that ‘once the principle of division was accepted it was in the interest of all parties that it should be carried out with the utmost speed’. If the result has not been entirely satisfactory — as for instance in the manner in which the problem of states has been handled or in the haste with which the work of settling the boundaries between the divided provinces has been carried out — it is only fair to remember that the Indian leaders were primarily responsible for accepting division”.

The new Dominion of India was born on the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, when the Constituent Assembly at a historic session assumed power for the governance of the country and signified its approval of the choice of Lord Mountbatten as Free India's first Governor-General.

The Hindu heralded the advent of freedom with a 20-page supplement with the heading “Dominion of India” on the multi-coloured cover page, and showing the National flag over a map of India. It carried articles on the story of the freedom struggle by top leaders and also three pages of pictures which had the caption. “Freedom's progress through the years”.

The Hindu's leading article on the historic day was titled “Red letter day” and said: “By the grace of Providence India enters the comity of free nations today, an equal among equals. It is an occasion for rejoicing not only for her people but for all who value human freedom as an end in itself. So long as this country with her hoary civilisation and many-sided culture, her wealth of resources and matchless opulence of spirit remained in political bondage, that very fact constituted an implicit denial of those values to which the dominant nations of the West were wont to pay lip service. That India has at long last achieved her independence by agreement with Great Britain is a fact for which the sagacity and statesmanship of Britain is entitled to the fullest credit. Other imperial powers are bound to follow in her footsteps sooner or later for the heart has gone out of imperialism”.

Referring to Gandhiji, The Hindu said: “By imbuing his countrymen with faith and sustaining it through the long night of darkness and despair, Mahatma Gandhi has not only won for himself a secure place in our affections; he has placed all humanity in his debt. To him and to the countless men and women who sacrificed themselves cheerfully that others might live to breathe the ampler air of freedom, our hearts turn today in reverent homage. We have achieved freedom; but at what cost! A country and a people that by every test are a unity have been arbitrarily divided. And the wound will take long to heal; for as Mr. Nehru has sadly remarked, ‘Division has taken place in the hearts of the people of India’. But it is idle to brood over what has happened and foolish

to get angry and cast about for scapegoats. Many think there is bound to be a reunion when there has been time enough for people to reflect coolly on the disastrous consequences of this unnatural partition. That is as it may be. But those who are perpetually harping on it, whether from genuine distress or in a fractious spirit will not be hastening that consummation. It can only act as an irritant. The temptation for the protagonists of a united India and of Pakistan to talk at each other from a distance should be set aside. And both sides should concentrate on the thousand and one practical tasks that will have to be tackled in a spirit of mutual accommodation if life is not to be unnecessarily hard for large masses of men."

Within a week of the proclamation of freedom large scale disturbances broke out in Pakistan and Indian Punjab and in the North-West Frontier province of Pakistan. There were widespread killing of one community by another and arson and looting. Women were abducted and children slaughtered. A great exodus of population from one country to another began and not many survived the ordeal. It was later estimated that millions of people on either side of the border must have lost their lives in the holocaust.

The Hindu wrote on August 27 "Though Pakistan has become a political reality its creators seem to be hag-ridden by a sort of psychological hangover. They see open persecution and insidious enmity everywhere. And when the imperative need of the hour is to still the passions they have roused they find it far more tempting to use language which must inflame instead of soothing. The outbreak of violence in East Punjab was bad enough. Why should the League leaders seek to make out that the victims all belong to one community? They have not a word to say about the butchery and devastation that has been going on in Lahore, the cold blood instigation of mob fanaticism that in Quetta has, within the twinkling of an eye, brought death and misery to large numbers of the minority communities and the incitement of violence that in Sylhet is a repetition of the horrors of Naokhali".

The Hindu contrasted the handling of the disturbances in East Punjab with that in West (Pakistan) Punjab and noted that the situation in East Punjab had been rapidly brought under control by energetic action. "The West Punjab Government confesses its inability to assure safety of travel – people waiting in Lahore station have been done to death while the police did not lift a little finger to save them – and contents itself with the warning that no railway passenger is free from danger". The Hindu added: "The spirit of violence has infected large masses of men and no Government which values peace can afford to be complacent".

Reporting on the situation, the Delhi Correspondent said that the total absence of reliable news of the developments in West Punjab "is causing grave concern. An endless stream of refugees is trekking into Delhi and the United Provinces. This has thrown on the administrative services the dual burden of providing relief for the refugees and preventing recrudescence of communal violence by the refugees themselves and their local sympathisers. While the steps taken by the Government of India for the safety of refugees both in the East and West Punjab are being demonstrated almost daily, rigid censorship, if not total black out, of news from West Punjab and also from the North-West Frontier Province does not serve to ease the general tension. The earnestness with which the East Punjab Government is handling the situation

in spite of terrible handicaps has been greatly appreciated. While the loss of property by non-Muslims is heavy, loss of life among the two communities is believed to be almost even. Unauthorised participation of troops in riots and the manner in which bands of goondas are organising attacks on villages and the massacre of innocent people both in West and East Punjab almost reproduce war-time conditions."

Press Correspondents touring with Jawaharlal Nehru the disturbed areas of the two Punjab in a joint dispatch from Lahore on September 2 said "The fair land of the five rivers is to-day torn by a veritable civil war. That is calling a spade a spade. In one respect this is worse than a civil war in that it is the defenceless, helpless minorities that are the victims of a fierce, primitive, blind vengeance. While in the East Punjab the new administration had hardly time to organise itself before it was overwhelmed by a wave of violence, in the West Punjab the administration has practically collapsed under the strain of the large-scale mob rule. But whereas in East Punjab a strongly based Central Government has stepped in and taken matters in hand the hardly fortnight-old Pakistan Government has proved equally ineffective in West Punjab. With the communal virus spreading to the police force and even to the army, the demoralisation is almost complete. While the wave of unprecedented violence is spending itself in East Punjab thanks to some energetic action on the part of the Governor, Sir C. Trivedi, and the Central Government, the conditions in the rural areas of West Punjab are still grave".

In another dispatch the Correspondents wrote, "The gigantic refugee relief machinery is getting into swing. The great exodus has begun which may involve an exchange of over a million people on each side — an operation unprecedented in its size and historic significance calling forth all the organisational ability of the military and the civilian authorities. For over two hours this morning we watched the quaintest cavalcade passing along. That was the first organised evacuee party of Hindu and Sikh refugees on its way to Amritsar. Men, women and children with their few movable earthly belongings including bicycles, charpoys and pots, on 60 trucks and a myriad of donkey carts, bullock carts and horse carriages formed the caravan. Besides hundreds trekked driving their cattle along. A flying military jeep patrol shepherded the procession which was also interspersed with lorries with troops. These refugees were the first batch of the 10,000 Hindus and Sikhs crammed in the D A V. College Camp. To-day two Air Force Dakotas brought all the way from Delhi 60 maunds of chappatis and dropped them to the large group of refugees stranded at various points on the west bank of the river Ravi. These refugees were practically marooned, unable to cross the river and harassed by marauders and run out of food supplies. Thirteen thousand lorries have been mobilised by the Government of India to carry out this major operation of exchanging evacuees from East and West Punjab. The Pakistan Government is co-operating in this task".

"The Punjab is bleeding for one of the costliest blunders in history", cried The Hindu in agony. "If you wanted to partition the country why did you not first arrange for exchange of population? See what misery has come upon us all". In that despairing cry of a simple rustic woman face to face with India's sorrowing Prime Minister, one fancies that one hears the reproachful voice of generations unborn. The series of tragic events that had banished peace and

security from the north-east and north-west of India for many months previous to the appointed day, should have been ample warning against the unwisdom of assuming that a changeover could be effected in a few days and with scarcely a jolt. And the idea of devolving the entire responsibility on a boundary force composed and authorised in the way in which this particular force was, was no less a capital mistake. The force was mostly composed of men who were strangers to the terrain and it was obviously weakened by internal stresses arising from divided loyalties".

The Hindu added: "It is no use crying over spilled milk. What is more important is that, now that the Pakistan Government as well as the Government of India seems to realise that a tremendous effort is needed to pull the country back to safety from the precipice for which it seemed to be headed, concerted and continuous action on the part of both the Governments should be possible".

On September 6 disturbances broke out in Delhi and the story of the Punjab was repeated. It took three days for the situation to improve thanks to energetic measures taken by Sanjeevi Pillai, Chief of the Delhi Police. "The loss of property by arson and looting is considerable", The Hindu Correspondent said. "The magnitude of the task facing the Delhi administration can be imagined if it is mentioned that forces at the disposal of the authorities for the maintenance of law and order are by no means large or free from other complications. The strain on the army which has also to deal with Calcutta, East Punjab and other disturbed areas is enormous. More than 50 per cent of the officers and men of the Delhi Police are those who have opted for Pakistan. In these circumstances the authorities are compelled to act with great restraint and caution".

In another dispatch the Correspondent said: "Gandhiji's presence in Delhi and his visit to the Muslim refugee camps at the Jumma Masjid and the Nizam's House has definitely inspired confidence among the Muslims to an extraordinary degree in the course of a very short space of time. In the main streets of New and Old Delhi which were free of Muslim pedestrians only yesterday, I found this morning an unexpectedly large number of Muslims moving about quite freely as though nothing had happened. It is indeed a welcome change. During yesterday and today nearly 16,000 Muslim refugees have been sent to Lahore with strong military escort".

K. S. Shelvankar cabled from New York the report of the New Delhi Correspondent of the New York Herald Tribune which praised the role played by the Madras Regiment, consisting of Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Christians in restoring order in Delhi. "The officers of the Madras Regiment", the Correspondent said, "admit wryly that their men are the most unpopular people in North India as a direct result of their willingness to arrest and detain Hindu and Sikh malefactors as quickly as Muslim wrongdoers. The principal cause of the Regiment's unpopularity however is the Regiment's obedience to the order to kill anyone found stabbing and looting. Whether popular or not the Madras Regiment fully backed by the Government of India seems today to maintain peace in the area of old Delhi which three weeks ago was littered with corpses".

Jawaharlal Nehru asked by Pressmen about the casualties in the Punjab disturbances said in Delhi on September 15, that the official figures were

15,000 killed but he agreed that these figures were low and might easily be doubled or trebled. He added that in the Delhi disturbances 1000 were killed

Referring to the scale of the riots in the Punjab, Nehru said. "We were rather taken unawares by these happenings. Perhaps it was our fault and we ought not to have been taken unawares by anything. And if a government is taken unawares it must suffer for it. For the first few days we rather underestimated what was going to happen. Having underestimated once, twice, three times, we decided not to do it again"

Nehru said looking at the disturbances in their proper perspective it was a long story. What they had seen in the last month was really a very extraordinary thing, extraordinary in India, for India was a more peaceful country than any other country in the world. Many average Indians had behaved with quite excessive brutality in the past few weeks, though normally they disliked killing even a mosquito or a snake. This meant that something had happened which had almost deranged and completely upset all their mental machinery – some terrible shocks or processes of shocks. Therefore if they wanted to understand then they must understand those processes of shocks that had made these peaceful individuals behave in this ferocious manner, Nehru said

Meanwhile, Pakistan made a stunt by approaching Britain and other Dominions for assistance in the solution of the communal problems affecting India and Pakistan and the Delhi Correspondent said government circles in Delhi dismissed it "as a calculated stunt by Pakistan to hide her own guilt and pretend to be the aggrieved party. While the fact of the Pakistan Government's intention to carry the problem, which should be capable of being mutually adjusted here, to the notice of Britain and the Commonwealth was perhaps known in Delhi for some time, the manner in which it was allowed to leak out to the news agency was not expected. As published in India the news might create the impression that India merely pleaded not guilty to Pakistan's charges. It is recalled that there has been correspondence going on between India and Pakistan ever since the Punjab carnage commenced. As is usual with Mr. Jinnah the Pakistan Government sent urgent telegrams complaining in exaggerated terms about attacks on Muslims in India and sent copies of these telegrams to everyone including British representatives in India and perhaps also to foreign ambassadors. These telegrams contained no reference to the butchery going on in West Punjab, the Frontier Province and Baluchistan. The Government of India gave a reply mentioning in detail the several incidents that had occurred. Unlike the Pakistan Government's provocative tactics the Government of India observed great restraint in their reply and there was no question of hesitation to admit facts. The commissions and omissions of the Pakistan Government were no doubt fully represented though no satisfactory reply was even expected from Pakistan. It is this correspondence that has been forwarded by the Pakistan Government to Britain and the Dominions.

"Obviously it is felt that the matter must end here as there is no likelihood of Pakistan ever demanding an impartial enquiry by the Commonwealth or the U.N. There is one aspect of the publicity in the foreign Press which is worth mentioning. The military spokesman of the Government of India daily gives Pressmen, Indian and foreign, a review of the situation in Delhi, East Punjab and other parts of the Indian Dominion. Some details about the happenings in Pakistan are also given by the Indian military spokesman which naturally lacks

authority until officially endorsed by Pakistan. The foreign Press therefore gets a full account of the situation in India while not a single line appears from Karachi, the Pakistan Government's headquarters. No doubt, truth ultimately pays but meantime wrong impressions may have been formed which it would take quite a long time to remove".

"It is a pity", The Hindu said, "no official statement has been issued by the Government of India regarding the Pakistan Government's appeal to the Dominions for intervention in settling the communal problem. Normally the need for reticence could be understood if the complaining party adopted a diplomatically correct attitude by refraining from semi-official publication of the complaint and giving no encouragement to the starting of a whispering campaign in the Press. Unfortunately Pakistan has since its inception been a law unto itself in these matters. Its leaders seem to believe in a many-pronged drive to prejudice world opinion against India, to give a leg-up to intransigent elements within India and to whip up the ignorant fanaticism of which Pakistan has more than its share. If Pakistan has appealed to Britain it is Britain's business to deal with that appeal as she best can in the light of such information as we are sure is available to her in abundance; if she were to do that Pakistan may prove less eager to press its request for intervention. But India, while ready enough to explore in co-operation with Pakistan every possible avenue with a view to achieving a friendly and lasting solution of the communal problem, will neither invoke nor welcome outside interference however well-meant".

"Hands off Indian Muslims", The Hindu told Jinnah in an editorial on October 25 when it commented on a press interview given by the Pakistan President in Karachi. It seemed to The Hindu remarkable that "Mr. Jinnah should not see the impropriety of talking of a 'revolt of the Indian Muslims against the Muslim League and the Pakistan Government'. If the followers of the Muslim League in the Indian Dominion are regarded by Pakistani leaders as owing fealty to the Pakistan Government or to any League organisation which may be controlled or directed from Pakistan it is they who will be laying themselves open to the charge of acting in a manner prejudicial to the growth of those cordial relations between the two Dominions which Mr. Jinnah would like to see established. There is no doubt that Mr. Jinnah feels pretty uncomfortable over the questions now being posed with increasing insistence by Indian Muslims. He asks them to remember that they should have known all along that they themselves would have no place in Pakistan which they worked for. That they do not regret their position as minorities in the Indian Dominion should be obvious from the fact that in the vast part of the territories of the Dominion, the Muslim inhabitants have shown not the slightest nervousness about the future. What a sad contrast to this is afforded by the ever-swelling stream of non-Muslim refugees fleeing from every Pakistan Province except possibly Bengal, in spite of the fact that they are not allowed to carry with them anything more than the clothes they are wearing".

The Hindu said. "We are glad to note that Mr. Jinnah is anxious that the two governments should exert themselves to the utmost to restore law and order. But an essential preliminary to this is that responsible people like him should put a rigorous control on their tongues. The Pakistan Government should realise that it could do no greater disservice to the Indian Muslims than to claim

some sort of extra territorial jurisdiction over the Indian Dominion because of the presence therein of a Muslim minority. And the less Mr. Jinnah or other leading lights of the League who have cast their lot with Pakistan interfere in the affairs of Indian Muslims the better it will be for all concerned. We hope Mr. Jinnah and his Government will remember that while they have every right to take a friendly interest in the welfare of Indian Muslims they can no more make that interest an excuse for countenancing active intervention or clandestine interference in the affairs of India than they can claim a voice say, in the government of China because there is a Muslim minority there. The two-nation theory they sponsored has logically brought about a political cleavage and a constitutional sundering which with all its consequences they must loyally accept".

H. S. Suhrawardhy, former Prime Minister of Bengal, addressing a conference of Indian Muslims in November said this of Nehru and Gandhi. "We pledge our support to the government of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, not merely lip-support, but true and loyal support, not merely because he is the head of the state but because in him we have found a true man of outstanding and mighty stature whose great moral qualities compel admiration and loyalty

"To Mahatma Gandhi we offer our homage and our tribute. He has proved himself to be the one shining light in a darkening world and may his efforts in the cause of peace and unity pierce the gloom of our hearts and establish the glorious reign of mutual friendship, goodwill, toleration and co-operation".

In a signed article in *The Hindu* on October 31, Sri Mirza Ismail, former Dewan of Mysore, pleaded for a reunion of India and Pakistan. He said. "Since August 15, an appalling situation has developed in this country and by 'this country', I mean both dominions for they are really one country. Partition has given the word Freedom a new meaning — freedom to hate, to burn, to murder and to loot but this freedom which we now enjoy has not yet inspired us to truth and act intelligently. The present situation is dynamite and if it is not to explode and take with it others as well as ourselves it must be handled with great care and with patience and perseverance"

Sir Mirza said: "Partition was an error, but it need not be an irremediable error. Yesterday it was accepted grudgingly and by many with distrust. Today the country looks to those leaders who have played such a prominent part in the struggle for freedom to secure for the people of India a degree of freedom even more important than freedom from foreign dominion — that is freedom from fear. In my view there is only one way in which a real and lasting peace can be established in India. Firstly, a political and economic union — even though it be a loose one — must bring together the sundered parts of the country, while assuring to each the largest possible measure of independence. Some machinery for joint action must be developed. Secondly, the people who have been so ruthlessly uprooted from their ancestral homes must be repatriated and their possessions must be restored to them".

But Sir Mirza's appeal was too late. Even as he was making his appeal frontier tribesmen, aided and abetted by the Governments of the North-West Frontier and Punjab Provinces of Pakistan invaded Kashmir and indulged in murder and loot. The Delhi Correspondent reported on October 27 that "according to Mr. Batra, Deputy Prime Minister of Kashmir, about 2000 Afridi soldiers, now on leave, have resorted to violence and are moving about in 100

motor trucks. Mr. Batra arrived in New Delhi and met Mr. Nehru last night. According to reports received here it appears that many columns of frontier and Afridi and Punjabi Muslims were moving towards Kashmir from the north and south and the sudden development has spread panic among the non-Muslim population of the state. The hydro-electric power station at Mohara is stated to have been seized by rebels a week ago. The Muslim population, aided by armed gangs from the Punjab and the Frontier, have been in virtual possession of the Poonch state and they take orders from Pakistan. It will be extremely difficult, it is said, for non-Muslims in Kashmir to defend themselves."

On October 26, 1947, the Maharaja of Kashmir appealed to the Government of India for help to put down local disturbances and maintain law and order. The Delhi Correspondent said the request had been practically granted by the Government of India. "The latest reports indicate", he said, "that Muslim raiders who came from Pakistan territory were ex-soldiers led by trained officers. The bulk of the Muslim population of Poonch consists of ex-army men and these joined the raiders. The raiders appear to have employed sound strategy before they thrust into Kashmir from the neighbourhood of Abbotabad. Small batches of Muslims from Pakistan penetrated the southern border of Kashmir in about 10 or 12 places and thus forced the Kashmir administration to deploy its troops to meet the incursion. Out of the 10,000 trained troops which Kashmir has, about a third are Muslims. Naturally if the remaining non-Muslim troops were spread over Kashmir and Jammu, the border becomes vulnerable in many places. Advantage was taken of this situation by the raiders and they poured in from the north as the troops were busy clearing the intruders in the south. Apparently the strategy of the raiders succeeded and they are within 35 miles of Srinagar. Dumei and also Uri have fallen to the raiders. The raiders seem to have a plentiful supply of arms, machine guns, Bren guns, rifles, motor trucks and other equipment for armed operations. The Maharaja's request for aid has not come a day too soon; in fact it has come at the proverbial eleventh hour. Tension in Srinagar has increased and panic-stricken Hindus and Sikhs are desperately trying to escape. The Maharaja has left Srinagar for Jammu and this has added to the panic among the people. A matter of supreme satisfaction and encouragement to the Non-Muslims of Srinagar was the fact that the Kashmir National Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah rose to the occasion and several thousands of volunteers of the National Conference have come forward and are actually engaged now in maintaining law and order in Srinagar".

On October 27 it was announced that the Maharaja of Kashmir had acceded to the Indian Union and following his request Indian troops were rushed to Kashmir. Agency reports on October 27 from Srinagar said that Indian troops were in action against the raiders. The New Delhi Correspondent reported: "Even while accepting Kashmir's accession the Government of India has made it clear that at the earliest possible moment, as soon as Kashmir was cleared of the invaders, the state's accession should be settled by a reference to the people". The Correspondent added: "Informed circles do not minimise the gravity of the responsibility undertaken by the Government of India in accepting Kashmir's accession and in agreeing to send military aid to Srinagar at this time even though our own troops are fully engaged in emergent evacuation work. The military situation in Kashmir still appears to be confused and not



altogether satisfactory. Two or three companies of the state forces have joined the invaders. The only means of approaching Srinagar is by air and this morning, it is understood, steps were taken to rush at least one battalion of troops from Delhi to Srinagar. Several civilian planes which usually leave Delhi every morning for various Indian cities were requisitioned to carry troops to Srinagar".

The Hindu could not but suspect the hand of Pakistan behind the raiders. "The official leaders of Pakistan", it wrote, "may or may not be connected with this move. It is too early to pronounce judgment. But what cannot be denied is that these Afridis who have carried fire and sword into Kashmir are drawn from the North-West Frontier Province which is now part of Pakistan and is ruled by a Ministry installed by Mr. Jinnah after he had ousted the previous Congress Ministry. And there is abundant evidence that they have their base in and have drawn their supplies from Pakistan. This aggression will take a lot of explaining. And to put it mildly, the people of Kashmir as a whole are not likely to feel more kindly towards Pakistan".

The tribesmen's raid on Kashmir later became a fullscale invasion of the state by Pakistan armed forces and it was the beginning of the first Indo-Pakistan war which was stopped after intervention by the United Nations who called for a cease-fire. And the cease-fire line with some subsequent modifications still holds with Pakistan occupying a small part of the original Kashmir and Jammu state and the rest of the state fully integrated with the Indian Union.

There was a controversy over the part played by British officers of the Indian army during this period. The Governor of the North-West Frontier Province, Sir George Cunningham, wrote a letter to General Sir Rob Lockhart, Commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, warning him of the preparations being made by the Frontier tribesmen for an invasion of Kashmir. But neither Gen. Lockhart nor Gen. Bucher, serving under him, passed this on to the Indian Cabinet. A Press note by the External Affairs Ministry on August 6, 1948 said that Sir George wrote a private letter to Sir Rob in which he gave the warning that frontier tribesmen were infiltrating into Kashmir, that the members of the N.W.F. Government were actively helping the infiltration and that he doubted if he could prevent it. The Government of India denied that Sir Rob kept the letter secret though he was entitled to do so. They added that the contents of the letter were known to several high military and civil officers at the time. Indeed the information contained in that letter was the first intimation which led the Indian Defence Ministry to expedite the dispatch of arms to the Kashmir Government. The Government of India, therefore, exonerated Sir Rob of the charge of having kept the vital information secret and thereby conspired against the Indian Union.

P. Kodanda Rao of the Servants of India Society, was not satisfied with the Government of India's explanation and in a letter to the Editor of The Hindu asked for further elucidation. The letter was not published in The Hindu but appeared in the Hindustan Times of Delhi and the Editor of The Hindu asked K. Rangaswami, its representative in Delhi, to follow it up. Kodanda Rao wanted to know what happened to the letter. Did Sir Rob take it away with him or destroy it? He wrote: "If Sir Rob has merely taken it away he could have been persuaded to loan it to the Government of India for presentation to the United Nations when the matter was raised there by the Government of India. Even if

he had destroyed it, Sri Rob could have been persuaded to testify before the U.N. Indeed Sir George Cunningham might have kept a copy of such an important document and might have been persuaded to produce it or testify to it before the U.N. Even more surprising and unsatisfactory is the admission by the Government of India that the fact of the letter was not remembered in these early anxious days".

Rangaswami wrote to the Editor: "The fact is that neither Gen. Lockhart nor Gen. Bucher mentioned about Cunningham's letter to anybody. It was only a day before the Indian army officers met the U.N. Commission on Kashmir that Gen. Bucher made mention of this letter to the defence committee of the Cabinet. It is not Government's intention to expose the British officers concerned as it is felt it will have an unfavourable repercussion on Indo-British relations at this time when India would need Britain's support in her dealings with Pakistan"

Although the British had quit India on August 15, 1947, there remained foreign pockets, of the French and Portuguese and The Hindu demanded their liquidation too. "When 400 millions were being freed from British yoke on August 15, ten lakhs of Indians were still the subjects of foreign powers", it wrote. "This anomalous position has been created by the attitude taken by Portugal and France towards the demand for union with India put forward by the inhabitants of their outposts in this country. For over a year now the 'Quit India' movement has been gathering strength in French and Portuguese territories. It started as an agitation for civil liberties and democratic Government but in view of India's rapid march to independence the movement now clearly demands merging with the Indian Union".

The Hindu added. "If France and Portugal believe that they can maintain their footholds on Indian soil by doling out reforms they are very much mistaken. They have no justification to continue their rule in this country. The new India will not relish the idea that foreign powers should have control over territories in her soil where the writ of her government will not run. The time to end this anomalous situation has come. We are certain that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will take up the question at the highest level". But these two foreign pockets were not cleared without a fight. In the case of French possessions there was a people's uprising and the French Government gracefully submitted and quit, while military action became necessary in the case of Goa where the Portuguese would not release their hold.

In an inquest on British rule in India The Hindu discussed the role played by the civil service, the steel frame as it was called. It referred to Mr. Attlee's tribute to it as having done "a great work in training the Indian people for self-government" and said: "In so far as that claim can be sustained their contribution must be deemed incidental and often unconscious. Their *raison d'être* was the maintenance intact of British rule in India. The recruits to the key services, being drawn from the British middle classes, upheld the standard and reflected in the day-to-day administration the views and even the prejudices currently held in the mother country. Corruption was rampant under the administration of East India Company, the English factors being far more venal than their Indian subordinates. And though with the emergence of the Haileybury-trained civilians matters improved somewhat, the traditions of a Government carried on by what was primarily a trading corporation which

levied taxes and maintained the peace so as to do its work of exploitation unhampered, lingered long after the Crown took over. The new civilians were recruited on fat salaries which a poor country could ill-afford on the plea that inadequate salaries were a direct inducement to corruption, but the vast army of Indian underlings continued to be miserably ill-paid and naturally graft flourished. The I C S. hierarchy was serenely unaware of this or at least carried on as if it knew nothing about it. Unlike their rather disreputable but likable predecessors of the Company days and the Haileyburians who had followed them, the new I C S. lived practically in complete isolation. This was partly due to their ignorance of the native tongues, partly to the notion which was zealously fostered by the senior members of the service that if they were to inspire respect they must not make themselves too familiar. As between Indian and Indian they tried to be just; but as the notorious agitation over the Ilbert bill showed, they considered themselves as a race apart and as the custodians of the rights, privileges and interests of their own countrymen. As administrators they were often in advance of their own country. Thus under the influence of Mill and Bentham they inaugurated reforms which a later generation labelled State Socialism; we must remember that unlike the statesmen of England they had not to bother about public opinion. Many of these men made excellent use of the superb opportunities they had to do pioneering work in anthropology and the social sciences. Some were moved by a genuinely humanitarian impulse. But they all held that their primary duty was to uphold British power and prestige. They were intensely suspicious of attempts to awaken Indian opinion by those whom they contemptuously dubbed as agitators. In carrying out such unpalatable reforms as the introduction of local self-government they were so little anxious to secure Indian co-operation that the reforms made little headway. They have always been unimaginative. Latterly, since the introduction of representative institutions, about four decades ago, they have become increasingly apathetic, though some of them have revealed and revelled in a pretty talent for the arts of the hustings. Mr. Lloyd George pronounced judgment for all time when he called them the 'steel frame'. The tradition they had built up had not the seeds of life and growth in it".

Leonard W. Matters, London Correspondent of *The Hindu*, who was on a visit to India in April, 1947, noted a serious drawback in Indian leadership. The nationalist leaders, he said, had not trained a line of leadership for administering the country and tackling various problems confronting it. Matters who wrote an article on the impressions of his visit under the title: "A decade of change", said: "Probably it is not impertinent for the outsider to suggest that those who are in political charge in India to-day, those from whom Indians have come to expect great things are not necessarily the men and women who will actually reshape the new India and set her undeviatingly on her course to her inevitable grandeur as a nation. Without presuming to criticise any of those men and women it surely must be seen that in the main they are no longer young. That they have fought and suffered in a bitter struggle over the years; that some of them are exhausted and that most of them have by the very nature of the battle in which they have been engaged, acquired a habit or state of mind that may not permit them to adapt themselves to new requirements. A life spent in opposing, criticising, resisting and finally ousting alien rule and domination

s a life well spent but the question is whether or not that life has developed faculties of one kind — call it a mentality, psychology or what you will — that may not be fresh, vigorous and elastic enough for the next long battle which is for construction and development, an entirely changed set of conditions. The veterans of the essential preliminary struggle can see the goal clearly enough and have always been conscious of the purpose of their struggle, but are they those who will build the foundations of the new state and see its superstructure added? It detracts nothing from the honour due to them to suggest that perhaps a younger and different school of builders may be temperamentally and otherwise better fitted for the task."

The Hindu featured the story of the wedding of Princess (later Queen) Elizabeth and Prince Philip (nephew of Lord Mountbatten) in London on November 20, 1947. There was a double column display with three headings the first being, "Elizabeth Weds Philip Mountbatten" and there were three introductory paragraphs in double column, which was rare to see in The Hindu. There were also pictures of the bride and bridegroom. In an editorial the paper wished the royal couple "all happiness and long years devoted to the welfare of their people".

The Hindu found occasion to take a look at British justice and came to the conclusion that no one, however highly placed he might be, went unpunished if he was guilty of violating the law. It wrote on December 2 under the title "Implacable justice". "When a Minister in Britain trips or nods, he seldom escapes the penalty or attempts to. The price he has to pay may vary according to the magnitude of the offence — from the virtual loss of his political career to being put up on his best behaviour as a motorist". The Hindu went on to refer to the case of Harold Wilson, President of the Board of Trade, who was hauled up for exceeding the speed limit while driving and was fined £ 2 and his driving licence endorsed. The Hindu said. "It is a constant matter of wonder for visitors to England from other European countries that British law knows no favourites, speaking generally the courts deal a bit more severely with titled offenders than with others on the principle that they at least ought to know better. In few countries other than Britain would a Cabinet Minister be called on to answer a common policeman's charge of driving a few miles over the speed limit. The chances are that the policeman would share the fate of the dog in Goldsmith's fable which bit the man and died as a result".

The Hindu found something to grouse too and that happened to be the Grand Trunk Express which was the only through train from Madras to Delhi in 1947. This particular train achieved notoriety by being assailed in the Press and on the platform and even on the floor of the Central Legislative Assembly. "The G.T. Express", wrote The Hindu on December 27, 1947, "has been gaining an unenviable name for unpunctuality. It is the only direct rail link between Madras and Delhi. As such one expected that the Ministry of Transport and the Railway Board would see to it that the train travelled regularly and on time". The Hindu added: "What Sir F. E. James said of the train in the Legislative Assembly some years ago is as true to-day. It is neither "grand" nor an "Express".

The remark of Sir F. E. James to which The Hindu made a reference occurred in a speech in the Central Legislative Assembly on February 24, 1940 when

Sir Frederick, Whip of the European Group, moved a cut motion on the railway demand to discuss the vagaries of the Grand Trunk Express. He said: "The train I am referring to is the one leaving Madras and coming north to Bezwada at a speed of  $28\frac{3}{4}$  miles an hour (laughter). Then it turns rather to the west and between Bezwada and Nagpur it travels at the reckless speed of  $25\frac{1}{2}$  miles. On the way to Nagpur it reaches Wardha where it stops for 46 minutes, probably to enable the engine driver and the cleaner to visit the sage (renewed laughter). Leaving Wardha it takes a sharp turn to the right, which is understandable after leaving Shegaon (laughter). Then it pursues its non-violent course to Nagpur where it pauses for breakfast not for 46 minutes but 90 minutes. At Itarsi, I think, it has an epileptic fit and travels to Delhi at 34 miles an hour (laughter). Thus it takes 49 hours to do the trip between the two most important cities in India. If in luck, it comes in at Delhi at 9 in the morning. Unfortunately luck has been out for several years past. Sometimes it is an hour late, sometimes it is several hours late. This is called Grand Trunk Express. It is not grand, it is hardly trunk — if you saw the rolling stock you would be surprised — and I have said enough to show it is not an express" (Laughter).

**W**HEN GANDHIJI BEGAN an indefinite fast in Delhi on January 13, 1948 in order to bring about communal amity in the capital, The Hindu mildly protested "The proliferation of communal hatred, corruption and other corroding vices which has moved Gandhiji to take this step", The Hindu said, "is undeniable. But if India fights and wins the main battle she can hope to tackle these firmly; not otherwise". After referring to the evil designs of the Pakistan Government against which the Government of India had to struggle, The Hindu said: "It (the Government of India) has therefore a right to expect from Gandhiji the utmost forbearance and co-operation. The fast might on the other hand embarrass it terribly and weaken its hands at this critical juncture. It is for this reason that we feel we must, notwithstanding his express injunction, plead with him to give up the fast".

Gandhiji, however, survived the fast which was broken after representatives of both Hindus and Muslims pledged themselves to maintain communal peace in the Capital, but he did not survive the assassin's bullet. There had been a bomb explosion at the prayer meeting on Birla House grounds towards the last week of January but Gandhiji was not much worried about it. It turned out that it was a dress rehearsal for what was to happen on January 30. On that day an assassin shot Gandhiji dead as he was walking to the prayer ground from Birla House in the evening.

The incident was thus described by the Delhi Correspondent: "Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, was shot at 5.12 p.m. today and he died 15 minutes later. Gandhiji left his room in Birla House for the prayer meeting a few minutes after the conclusion of his talk with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He passed through the garden leaning on the shoulders of Ava Gandhi and Manu Gandhi, grand daughter-in-law and grand niece. As he walked up the four steps leading to the prayer mandap, a young man, aged about 35, came before Gandhiji and bending his body forward at a distance of less than two yards, offered *pranam* (salutation). Gandhiji returned the salute when the young man remarked: "You are late today for the prayer". Gandhiji smiled and replied: "yes, I am". But just at that moment the young man pulled out his revolver and rang out three shots from point blank range, the bullets piercing the frail body of the great leader just below the heart and stomach. Immediately Gandhiji collapsed, but Ava Gandhi and Manu Gandhi stuck to their places by his side

and held him firmly. But that was the last of the Nation's father. It was then 5.12 p.m. The last act that Gandhiji did was to lift both his hands as a sign of prayer in the direction of a large gathering which had assembled for the prayer. Thereafter he was speechless and the loss of blood at his age and so soon after his fast made death inevitable. He was beyond medical aid even from the start when shock had its effect."

The Correspondent said: "The assassin soon after he fired the shots was seized by the people who had come to attend the prayer. His revolver – a six chambered one — and some cash were recovered. It appears he was beaten by the crowd and was slightly injured. The police have taken him into custody and investigation is proceeding. It is learnt that the name of the assassin is Nathuram Vinayak Godse (aged 30), a Mahratta. He described himself as Editor of a daily paper called *Hindu Rastha* published in Poona. He wore khaki pants and tunic".

The Mahatma was cremated on the banks of the Yamuna on January 31. The Delhi Correspondent reported: "Mahatma Gandhi was cremated this evening on the banks of the holy Yamuna 24 hours after his assassination. Besides the thousands upon thousands of his countrymen who had gathered from far and near to catch a glimpse of his ever smiling and unruffled face, most of his friends, relations and co-workers were by his side. If anything could bring the dead back to life the tears shed today in the cremation ground must have done so. By 6 p.m. Mahatma Gandhi's mortal remains were completely reduced to ashes".

The Correspondent describing the earlier scenes said: "Very early in the morning the body of the great leader was bathed in Yamuna water and wrapped in the tricolour and laid in state. Flowers were heaped all over the body except the face. Incense was burning continuously while the inmates of his ashram and co-workers recited verses from the *Bhagawat Gita*. The body was kept in the same room in Birla House from where Gandhiji had been carrying on his political and humanitarian work all these months. Long before 6 o'clock in the morning, the citizens of Delhi had begun making their way towards Birla House to have a last glimpse of Gandhiji. The crowd was allowed to enter Birla House from Aurangzeb Road behind Birla House and march past Gandhiji's room in single file. Almost everyone in the crowd had the satisfaction of seeing the Mahatma at close quarters, less than two feet from where his body lay".

Describing the funeral procession the Correspondent said: "Gandhiji's last journey commenced at the appointed time, namely, half past eleven. Pandit Nehru, Prime Minister, sat in front of the bier (which was carried on a gun carriage) while Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Acharya Kripalani, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Ramdas Gandhi (Gandhiji's son) sat on the two sides. A detachment of cavalry led the procession to keep off the crowd from the bier. It was followed by a company of policemen and soldiers. Then came the gun carriage while other leaders walked behind. The procession was brought up in the rear by another company of soldiers and detachments of mounted police. Then came thousands of women singing *Ram Dhun* and bhajans in which the crowds joined. It took exactly five hours for the procession to reach the burning ghat, a distance of four and half miles. The crowds lined the roads 10, 20, 30 deep and as the bier passed people on both sides gathered behind, by the time the procession reached the cremation ground it became extremely

unwieldy, taxing every ounce of energy and patience of the police and military”.

To the Editor of The Hindu and his staff the two-word flash at about 5 20 p.m. on the API printer. “Gandhi Shot” on that fateful evening of January 30 came as a stunning blow and many who crowded round the teleprinter were sobbing. The Dak edition had already been put to bed but the rotary was stopped while it was running and the news was carried.

“The oppressed and exploited of all nations”, The Hindu wrote, “feel that the most powerful voice raised in the cause of justice in our time has been stilled. The only world citizens we have had or are ever likely to have are the saints who touch a chord in every heart. The Mahatma had joined this shining company and become a universal possession. ‘Friend of all things that are, ever at peace with himself, of love and compassion all compact’, today his work done he walks with God. A great nation feels orphaned and desolate; its heart is wrung with an intolerable anguish and its head bowed in desperate shame. Those few last moments when brother’s hand was raised against brother were working with tragic inevitability to the climax that came with the foul deed of last Friday. Those who watched Gandhiji closely knew that it was for him the *via dolorosa*. But his faith in the future never wavered. And it is that faith which must sustain us now, setting aside unavailing grief and wounding recriminations. It is in that spirit that Gandhiji would have wished us to work. He had abundant faith in his people and now the time has come when we must justify it or perish. He has gone but his example remains. Not for nothing did he inculcate self-reliance as the supreme virtue. . . He is a reminder to us that an exalted ethic can go hand in hand with practical good sense, that ruthlessness in action is compatible with a boundless love. Men like him are a perpetual rebuke to the faint hearted of every generation, they are the ideal made flesh. India today is like a bundle of faggots from which the binding cord has been loosed. The spirit of turbulence and disorder, not having been exorcised, but only kept down in the main by force during the long period of foreign rule is finding protean expression. And in a world ruled by power politics it is only strength that is respected. At such a time the country needs staunch leadership and she is supremely fortunate in this respect; for she has in Mr. Nehru and his trusted colleagues men valiant and true, who have grown in the shadow of the Mahatma and yet have not been stunted. They have learnt from him that while the basis of moral authority is principle, a sense of direction is as important, as fixity of purpose. Statesmanship today must be dynamic. An amorphous mass of aspirations has to be integrated; life has to be made meaningful for the millions who have led a twilight existence, new tracks must be laid for the questing spirit. Let us remember that Gandhiji’s immense strength was derived from the fact that his ear was ever close to the earth to catch the heartbeats of humanity. And he scorned the letter that killeth. He created his own tools and made no fetish of them. He had a supreme mastery of technique; but he knew, none better than he, that no technique is useful for all time or in every circumstance. The modern world and India’s own unorganised state are full of opportunities as well as perils for her people. If only her leaders act with faith and courage, the Mahatma’s mighty dream of establishing righteousness on earth may yet come true”.



The Hindu featured the tributes to Gandhiji that came from all over the world in the next few weeks. As Nehru remarked in a broadcast: "Two weeks of homage and tribute from every corner of the globe, from kings and potentates and those in high authority to the common man everywhere who instinctively looked to him as a friend, a comrade and a champion"

Leonard W. Matters from London described how the news of the Mahatma's assassination was received in Britain. "In almost half a century of newspaper life", he cabled, "I have never known any item of sudden and sensational news create such an extraordinary effect as that occasioned by the tragic news of the death of Mahatma Gandhi. The report came like a bolt from the blue. It was a staggering blow to everybody and there was a spontaneous and generous realisation or rather a sensing that something terrible for all of us had happened. One could almost hear, as it were, a collective sign of anguish and a pained cry of 'oh!'. Toughened journalists who will normally handle tragic news in a casual manner treated this event in an entirely different manner. They sensed what it meant to their readers, to themselves, to mankind. A very mixed men's club near my office received the report in silence and something like awe. A friend who had given a lift to a R.A.F. officer tells me that when his car radio gave the news, the young airman was visibly moved and exclaimed, "God! what a tragedy for the world?" Personally I have had a number of letters from those who know my feelings and all of them express sympathy as though I had sustained a family bereavement. One, the wife of a simple farm labourer says: "what a loss this good man is to you and to England of which he was such a friend"

Shiva Rao in an article in The Hindu many years later mentioned an incident on the day of the assassination. As he was in the crowd outside Birla House, Shiva Rao said, hearing Nehru's announcement of the death of the Father of the Nation, he heard two well dressed young men discussing the tragedy. One of them said to the other in Hindi: "We have got rid of one. How long will this man (Nehru) last?" Shiva Rao had a good look at the man who spoke thus but by the time he could look at them closer they jumped over the flower beds and ran away. Shiva Rao went home and telephoning a police officer told him what he had seen and heard and gave a description of the men he had seen. But unfortunately what he said probably had been misunderstood because Shiva Rao found policemen shadowing him during the funeral procession.

Almost eight months after the passing away of the Mahatma occurred the death of his great political opponent and creator of Pakistan, Mahomed Ali Jinnah. The Hindu paid him a rich tribute and there was no acerbity or rancour in it. It said in undivided India next to Gandhiji Jinnah was the most powerful leader. "And not only among his fellow Muslims but among members of all communities there was great admiration for his sterling personal qualities even while the goal which he pursued with increasing fanaticism was deplored. For more than half the period of nearly 40 years in which he was a towering figure in our public life he identified himself so completely with the struggle that the Indian National Congress carried on for freedom that he came to be as nearly a popular idol as it was possible for a man so aristocratic and aloof by temperament to be. During the last years of his life, as the architect of Pakistan, he achieved a unique authority in his own community by virtue of the blind allegiance which the mass, dazzled by his political triumphs, gave

him though the sane and sober elements of the community became more and more doubtful of the wisdom of his policies. In an age which saw century-old empires crumble, this Bombay lawyer began late in life to dream of founding a new empire, in an era of rampant secularism this Muslim, who was never known to be very austere in his religion, began to dally with the notion that the empire should be an Islamic State. And the dream became a reality overnight and perhaps no man was more surprised at his success than Mr Jinnah himself. Mr. Jinnah was an astute lawyer. And his success was largely due to the fact that he was quick to seize the tactical implications of any development. His strength lay not in any firm body of general principle, any deeply cogitated philosophy of life but in throwing all his tremendous powers of tenacity, strategy and dialectical skill into a cause which had been nursed by others and shaped in many of its most important phases by external factors. In this he offers a marked contrast to the Mahatma with whom rested the initiative during the 30 years he dominated Indian political life and who however much he might adapt himself to the thrusts of circumstance was able to maintain on a long range a remarkable consistency. Pakistan began with Iqbal as a poetic fancy, Rahmat Ali and his English allies provided it with ideology and dogma. Britain's divide and rule diplomacy over a period of half a century was driving blindly towards this goal. What Mr Jinnah did was to build up a political organisation, out of the moribund Muslim League, which gave coherence to the inchoate longings of the mass by yoking it to the realisation of the doctrinaire's dream. Two world wars within a generation, bringing in their train a vast proliferation of nation states, as well as the decay of established imperialism and the rise of the totalitarian idea were as much responsible for the emergence of Pakistan as the aggressive communalism to which Mr. Jinnah gave point and direction".

The Hindu said Jinnah was a man of ambition. "He had a very high opinion of his own abilities and the success, professional and political, that had come to him early in life, seemed fully to justify it. It irked him to play second fiddle. The Congress in those early days was dominated by mighty personalities, Dadabhai Naoroji, Mehta and Gokhale, not to mention leaders of the left like Tilak. That no doubt accounts for the fact that Mr Jinnah gradually withdrew from the Congress organisation and cast about for materials wherewith to build a separate platform for himself. At this time the first world war broke out and the idea of self-determination was in the air. It was not a mere accident that Mr Jinnah came to formulate the safeguards which he deemed necessary for the Muslim minority in his famous 14 points so reminiscent of the Wilsonian formula".

The Hindu pointed out that Jinnah had no sympathy with the Ali Brothers' Khilafat campaign and he was not attracted by the Gandhian Congress because of his nervousness about the consequences of rousing mass enthusiasm. "The result was that he went into political hibernation for some years. But he remained keenly observant; and the dynamic energy generated by a successful policy of mass contact deeply impressed him. He came to see that a backward community like the Muslims could be roused to action only by an appeal, simplified almost to the point of crudeness, to what touched it most deeply, its religious faith. And a close study of the arts by which the European dictators, Mussolini, Hitler and a host of lesser men rose to power led him to

perfect a technique of propaganda and mass instigation to which 'atrocities-mongering' was central. But Mr. Jinnah could not have been entirely happy over the Frankenstein monster that he had invoked especially when the stark horrors of the Punjab issued with all the inevitability of Attic tragedy from the contention and strife that he had sown. He was a prudent man to whom by nature and training anarchy was repellant. At the first R.T.C. he took a lone stand in favour of a unitary government for India because he felt that Federation in a country made up of such diverse elements would strengthen fissiparous tendencies. It was an irony that such a man should have become the instrument of a policy which by imposing an unnatural division on a country meant by nature to be one, has started a fatal course the end of which no man may foresee. Mr. Jinnah was too weak to withstand the momentum of the forces that he had helped to unleash. And the megalomania which unfortunately he came to develop would hardly allow him to admit that he was wrong".

The Hindu accused Britain of being responsible for the disorders that followed partition because of its decision to withdraw in a hurry without planning. The charge was made when it paid a farewell tribute to Lord Mountbatten who carried out partition with singular skill and ability. Writing in June 1948, when Lord Mountbatten left India after being Free India's first Governor-General for less than a year The Hindu said: "The departure of the last British Governor-General from India marks the end of an era. Lord Mountbatten's tenure of his high office was one of the shortest on record but also one of the most momentous. It was not merely that great changes in the constitutional position and political destiny of India took place in these few short months. The tempo of change was something unprecedented. And that could be traced directly to the terrific energy and drive, the confident optimism and the perfect élan with which Lord Mountbatten rode the whirlwind and directed the storm. The result was that though the British Government had originally planned to complete the transfer of power this June, it was actually done ten months earlier. It is profitless to speculate whether this hectic speed at the last moment might not have been responsible for many faults of omission and commission, some of which such as the very casual manner in which the partition of the Punjab was effected, have had the most tragic consequences. The truth about these things may never be fully known. But enough has been said by the spokesmen of the British Government to suggest that the desperate haste in which Britain wound up her affairs in India was not due merely to Lord Mountbatten's tempestuous zeal for finishing the job on hand but to the realisation on the part of the makers of policy that Britain's strength in India was dangerously ebbing. If they had, the moment the war was over, squarely faced the fact that Britain had to get out and both honour and prudence required that in doing so she should fulfil her repeated pledges not to do anything that might affect the integrity and strength of India, they might have planned and carefully executed a leisurely withdrawal that would have imposed little strain on the administrative structure and might have saved millions from devastation and misery. Unfortunately they preferred to follow to the last a policy of improvisation. When they elaborated the plan of May, 1946, they must have realised that it was vitiated by a fundamental ambiguity which did not solve the communal problem but merely side-stepped it. When in January 1, 1947 Mr. Attlee at last came out with an explanation which resolved the ambiguity it was clear that

he British Government had in the guise of offering an interpretation effected a radical change of policy. It was this policy that Lord Mountbatten was commissioned to execute. There is no point in enquiring whether he had any hand in the making of it since India's leaders accepted it with their eyes open. True, the hurricane-like speed with which he set about the business allowed little time for second thoughts; but then second thoughts at that stage might, instead of deflecting the course of events, have merely had the effect of further weakening us by irresolution. It is not unlikely that Lord Mountbatten himself was surprised at the way things panned out in one or two respects. Thus his plan to remain as Governor-General of both the Dominions was upset by Mr Jinnah's decision to occupy the gadi in Pakistan. This development inevitably led to the scrapping of the joint Security Council after a short and rather inglorious term. Again Lord Mountbatten has been mistaken in supposing that he could win over Hyderabad to join the Indian Union and thus undo the ill effects of the British policy of conferring a chaotic freedom on the states. But apart from success or failure, his Lordship's personal charm, his well-bred ease and the sympathetic imagination which he brought to his task came to many as a pleasant revelation of a side of the British ruling class which had been far too little in evidence during Britain's long connection with India. Of him and Lady Mountbatten who so enthusiastically seconded his efforts to promote Indo-British accord, India will cherish the warmest recollections".

When Mountbatten left India all states but one had acceded to India. That exception was Hyderabad which as The Hindu pointed out Lord Mountbatten failed to persuade. But there was a regular war going on in another state, Kashmir, which had acceded to India, and it was a war with Pakistan which first through tribal raiders and then through its own armed forces was trying to grab Kashmir. The Hindu called upon the United Nations to insist that Pakistan accept the offer of plebiscite by India on the accession issue and withdraw its forces from the State. "Pakistan must learn to play the game according to the rules if it wants to remain in the comity of nations", it said.

The Hindu was unhappy that the big powers who dominated the U.N. Security Council were not playing the game either. "It seems as if India is paying the penalty for being correct in her attitude and having suggested herself proper methods of procedure," it wrote. "For example, the Government of India had declared on the day of Kashmir's accession that when hostilities ended a plebiscite would be held under international auspices to decide on the state's future. But the Security Council as the draft resolution indicates is not satisfied with this pledge. It wants the plebiscite to be conducted by the Council authorities and not by the State Government... Above all the draft resolution treats the Indian army defending Kashmir on the same footing as the invaders when it suggests that the Indian army should be withdrawn or alternatively Pakistan's armed forces should be admitted to restore a sense of parity and impartiality. That the Indian army is defending a part of the Indian Dominion (Kashmir is part of India after accession) and that there can be no question of its withdrawal unless the people of Kashmir in their plebiscite decided not to accede to India is conveniently forgotten by the Council members. The difficulty from the beginning has been that the Anglo-American powers and their satellites in the Security Council have identified themselves completely with the Pakistani cause. That they are actuated by considerations of power

politics in adopting this is a reasonable though unpleasant inference from their attitude. Appeasement of Pakistan may be necessary for them in their effort to retain control of the Middle East but that is hardly justification for the policy they have adopted. . . The Indian delegation has so far firmly held to its original purpose and refused to be browbeaten into compromising on essentials. Kashmir is equally a part of India and there can be no compromise where the integrity and sovereignty of the state is concerned”

A cease-fire was ordered in Kashmir from January 1, 1949 and arrangements were made for a plebiscite to be held under U.N. auspices. But a plebiscite could not be held since Pakistan refused to withdraw its armed forces and India would not agree to a plebiscite unless Pakistan vacated its aggression and a deadlock ensued which was never resolved.

Meanwhile, Pakistan made two more wars against India to annex Kashmir but without success and the Kashmir issue is still on Pakistan's agenda. The Hindu's columns in the years 1948-1960 are noteworthy for the spirited editorials on the Kashmir question, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

As the States Ministry tackled the problem of integration of states with vigour, The Hindu noted that “this integration takes different forms in different places. In some the forms are retained as in the case of the bigger states which have both a long and ancient history and traditions of distinctive progress. In respect of others, constitutional aggregation broadly along federal lines is the device adopted. In yet others regional and cultural affinities are taken advantage of to make out of them a political entity such as will logically fit into the new set up. It is gratifying to note that on the whole the Indian States Ministry has been seeking solutions to the problem on wisely conservative lines and been keenly alive to the fact that political societies cannot be torn up violently overnight without precipitating more problems than the reform was meant to meet”.

About the disappearance of Pudukottah State following its merger with Madras State, The Hindu said “There will be many both inside the State and outside who will regret the disappearance of Pudukottah from the ranks of entities. Under the patronage of the rulers of such states, indigenous culture had thrived in a manner and at a pace which was not possible for it in British Indian Provinces in the past. But in a world so rapidly changing and in the conditions of life today it is inevitable that small jurisdiction should disappear”. It may be mentioned here that the area of Pudukottah State was 1200 square miles and it had a population of five lakhs.

Commenting on a white paper on integration of States which was issued in July, 1948, The Hindu praised the States Ministry under the leadership of Sardar Patel for its energetic and rapid work of integration and pointed out that whatever the modification or alteration adopted to suit the conditions of the area, the States Ministry “has rightly refused to relax one essential condition, namely, that responsible Government should be set up. This has provided a natural outlet for the political energies of the people in the states which had so long been dammed up. The benefits of administrative integration are obvious. But the white paper justly emphasises that the responsibility for getting the most out of it is that of the new popular governments that have been set up. . . The welding of India into a constitutional unit is an achievement of which the country may well be proud. ‘There were not a few’ as the white paper says with

dispassionate truth, 'who nursed the hope that overwhelmed by the partition of India and the disruption of the states the Government of India would go under'. Their hopes have been falsified'.

Hyderabad proved a hard nut to crack even for the able States Ministry and the resourceful Governor-General Mountbatten. The Nizam did not hide his sympathy for Pakistan and concluded a standstill agreement with it as he did with India. The New Delhi Correspondent reported on January 6, 1948 that the Government of India had received information that the Nizam had granted a loan of Rs. 25 crores to Pakistan and that they were puzzled how this money went out of India. "The grant of a loan to Pakistan, it is pointed out, is definitely an unfriendly act at a time when the Government of India themselves have refused to pay the balance of cash allotted to Pakistan's share", he said.

Things grew from bad to worse in Hyderabad with the emergence of the Razakars, a rabid communal group who indulged in violence and unleashed a reign of terror in the state with the connivance and instigation of the Government. The Hindu wrote in June, 1948 "The Government in Hyderabad today is an autocratic administration carried on by men predominantly drawn from the small Muslim minority in the State and owing allegiance to a rabid communal organisation which through its private army has made a mockery of law and order in the State. Mir Laik Ali (Prime Minister) seriously contends that any radical alteration in the structure of this grossly unrepresentative and reactionary administration would have disastrous consequences for peace and tranquillity; and yet he asks the world to believe that such an administration could be depended upon to conduct with scrupulous fairness a plebiscite which might conceivably go against that independence which the Nizam and his advisers have time and again declared that they would never exchange for accession".

The Hindu after referring to the danger posed by the Razakars who could provide in plenty "those controversies and conflicts which are now pleaded as a pretext" added: "All this tragedy can be avoided only if Hyderabad agrees on the one hand to accession which would leave her the fullest autonomy in internal matters and on the other agrees forthwith to the principle of responsible Government to be fully implemented at a reasonably early date. It is idle for a state circumstanced as Hyderabad is to talk of independence which she has never known and which in the strenuous conditions of today she cannot hope to maintain. A Government which is either unable or unwilling to put down the Razakars can hardly be expected to be taken seriously when it talks of independence. India offers accession not because she wishes to dominate Hyderabad but because that is the only way, honourable to both sides, of meeting the obligations created by inescapable objective realities. These factors must prevail in the end however obdurate and shortsighted Hyderabad may be".

The Nizam, surrounded by evil advisers and the militant Razakars under the fanatic Kasim Razvi, was obdurate and tried every desperate step to escape accession to India including an appeal to the U.N. In July, 1948 he wrote a letter to the British King, a copy of which was carried by Richard Beaumont, Secretary to Sir Walter Monckton, Legal Adviser to the Nizam, and which was opened by the Delhi Customs. The Hindu on July 30 reported the substance of the letter under a Madras dateline. It said: "The Nizam in the letter, it is understood,

stated that he had all along been a "Faithful Ally" of His Majesty. This position had been confirmed in various treaties entered into by the Nizam with His Majesty. After August 15, the Nizam is reported to have stated, the Dominion of India had been harassing him for accession. He had now decided to appeal to the U.N. and that he expects the support of His Majesty in what he is trying to do."

The Delhi Correspondent reported on August 2 "Mr. Clement Attlee, the British Premier, it is understood, has sent a reply to the Nizam's request for the British Government's assistance for raising the Hyderabad issue before U.N. It is believed the British Government have given the Nizam sound advice urging him to be guided more by practical considerations than sticking fanatically to outworn privileges. It is believed the Nizam has been urged to bring about a peaceful solution with India bearing in mind that Hyderabad's future is indissolubly linked with that of India. The British Government have not left the Nizam in doubt as to their own attitude towards the latter's request to sponsor Hyderabad's case before U.N. The Nizam has been categorically told that the British Government would neither encourage the Nizam to seek allies to take the case before U.N. nor lend any support to the issue even if it were to be raised before the U.N. by other countries. . . Government of India circles are quite satisfied with the correctness of the British Government's attitude".

The Hyderabad Correspondent reported on August 24 that H.M. the King had sent his reply to the Nizam's letter through the Government of India. The King urged the Nizam to settle his dispute with the Indian Union by means of peaceful negotiations. Matters reached such a stage in the relations between Hyderabad and India that in September, 1948, the Government of India sent an ultimatum to the Nizam's Government that the Razakars should be disbanded and all necessary facilities should be allowed for re-stationing Indian Union troops at Secunderabad. The Nizam's Government replied that they had no intention of complying with the demand. The Hindu noted that the Nizam had in his reply confessed his inability to act independently of his Government. "Be it remembered that Hyderabad is, constitutionally speaking, under personal rule, the Nizam has the ultimate and exclusive responsibility for all that affects the peace and welfare of his state. He cannot take shelter behind his advisers when anything goes wrong for they are not responsible to the people. . . The Government of India are therefore justified, apart from other considerations, in taking him at his word and proceeding to make efficient arrangements for the discharge of the basic responsibility of maintaining peace which the Nizam is obviously unable to shoulder. This task which bears so vitally on the welfare not only of the people of the state but also of the people of the Indian Union cannot obviously be left to the caucus which calls itself the Government of Hyderabad and which has itself been the most potent factor militating against peace. . . As the tragic tale of murder and pillage in the State in the past few months has abundantly shown that the Nizam has failed, Indian troops have to return. Mr. Nehru did well to emphasise that they will with the Nizam's consent if possible, without it if necessary, since the Government of India cannot divest themselves of their overall responsibility for the safety and security of the country as a whole".

Indian troops crossed into Hyderabad on September 13, 1948 from three sides and the Police action began. "The entry of the Indian forces into the

State", The Hindu wrote, "may be represented by the Nizam's Government and their agents abroad as anything from a breach of the standstill Agreement to an act of wanton aggression and an infringement of Hyderabad's territorial integrity with a view to imposing a political decision. But India's position has been made clear repeatedly from the beginning and she is not going to be deflected from the path of duty either by the Nizam's propagandist activities or his war-like preparations. It is true that the fundamental problem of Hyderabad since the departure of the British has been a political one, namely, displacement of autocratic rule of the Nizam with the support of a small communal minority much to the detriment of the vast majority comprised by the Hindu community and the restoration to the people of the right to choose their own Government and decide the future of the State. On this point the Government of India have shown themselves anxious and ready to find a solution by negotiation without any suggestion of force or coercion. But the Nizam's Government had no such intention and it became progressively evident they were prolonging the phase of negotiations merely to gain time for the twin purpose of propaganda against India abroad and the secret piling of armaments at home by lavish spending and by recourse to the most discreditable means. It was not surprising that in such conditions private armies of freebooters sprang up and terrorised the countryside, loot and to some extent religious fanaticism provided the attraction for the scum of the earth to swell the ranks of the uniformed brigands. But it was surprising (at any rate in the early stages) the way the Nizam's Government found excuses for these marauding bands. Instead of heeding the Indian Government's warning against a menace to security of life and property which was extending its activities even beyond the borders of the State and taking prompt steps to put a stop to it with the active co-operation of the Indian Government, the Nizam's Government pretended to see in the Razakars the custodians of law and order and a spontaneous reaction to alleged raids from Indian territory. No wonder then the atrocities of the Razakars increased in tempo and area till they succeeded in establishing themselves as a *de facto* Government, governed and governing however by the law of the jungle. This growing peril to the peace and security of the State and the neighbouring provinces began to cause concern to the Indian Government to the exclusion of the political question so that their later correspondence with the Nizam's Government was naturally insistent on the immediate putting down of the Razakar movement as the first condition of any discussion. The Nizam's failure to take the necessary steps was for some time put down to his inability to do so. But when a stage was reached in the activities of the Razakars when it would have been suicidal alike for the State and for the Indian Union to allow the movement to continue, the latter offered to send troops to Hyderabad to assist the Government to restore law and order the maintenance of which was an implied condition of the original withdrawal of Indian troops from the State under the standstill Agreement. The Nizam's Government not only refused the offer but actively stated in terms which made it plain that it is no longer a case of inability but one of unwillingness; by now they must have amassed enough arms to wipe out the Razakars if they wanted to. The Government of India had no option but to proceed with their plans to finish the Razakars once for all without waiting for the permission, much less the co-operation of the Nizam's Government. This then is the objective of



the present operation . As for the people of Hyderabad to whatever community they may belong we would say they have nought to fear about their future if in this hour of crisis, they show themselves worthy of the freedom that is coming to them"

The police action in Hyderabad, master-minded by General Rajendrasinhji and carried out by General Choudhury was a swift and short affair. It was all over on the fifth day after the operation started and the Nizam surrendered on September 17. The Hindu congratulated the Indian army and its leaders "on the extraordinary swiftness and completeness with which they have achieved their objective And by ordering cease-fire when he realised the hopelessness of the situation, instead of persisting in a course of action which he should never have permitted at all, the Nizam has spared the people of the state the terrible sufferings which any prolongation of resistance must have inevitably resulted in. The people of India and their Government which was compelled to take Police action when it found there was no other way of coping with the virtual anarchy that had been let loose in the state, will rejoice no less than the people of Hyderabad themselves that the campaign for the restoration of law and order has been mercifully short. Thanks to the foresight and attention to detail with which the whole thing had been planned the avowed object had been accomplished with the minimum of bloodshed . The prophets of woe who confidently predicted that the action taken against Hyderabad would involve the entire Indian sub-continent in a bloodbath, will be sadly disappointed at the turn events have taken. There was never of course, any real justification for the fears that these good souls luxuriated in. The Muslim community in India has spontaneously and with gratifying unanimity supported the Government of India's stand and has treated with the contempt it deserved the unworthy suggestion that the Hyderabad crisis might put a serious strain on its loyalty. Indian Muslims in the past 12 months had abundant practical evidence of the Government of India's resolutely non-communal outlook and the fact that in its plans for setting up a free and secular democracy in India it contemplated the Muslims playing an honourable part. The repeated attempts of Kasim Razvi and his gang to whip up sympathy among them by suggesting that the Razakars were the vanguard of the Muslim fight against Hindu 'tyranny' proved a total failure . . . We fervently hope that Hyderabad will soon settle down under a Government fully responsible to its people, to a life of peaceful and constructive co-operation with the rest of India in fulfilling a common destiny".

V. K. Narasimhan, Assistant Editor, went to Hyderabad to cover for The Hindu events after the Nizam's surrender. In a dispatch from Secunderabad on September 19 he said: "The immediate task of the Indian forces in Hyderabad is to restore law and order throughout the State and the newly appointed military Governor, Major-General N. Choudhury, has all the powers needed for the purpose. This was stated by General Rajendrasinhji, G.O.C., Southern Command who arrived here this morning from Poona. He told Swami Ramanand Tirth (Congress leader who was released following police action) that it was now for leaders like him to tell the people how they should conduct themselves and remain calm and not take the law into their own hands, however much they might have suffered at the hands of Razakars in the past.

General Rajendrasinhji met a score of journalists representing Indian and foreign Press who arrived in Secunderabad late last night after a gruelling bus journey from Poona. The drive along the great trunk road from Sholapur to Hyderabad, the route taken by Major-General Choudhury's armoured column, was through picturesque country with green fields growing groundnut or maize on either side. Except for caterpillar tracks and army telephone lines on roadsides there was little evidence of any serious fighting anywhere. Since the entry of Indian troops into Secunderabad there is complete calm in the Capital and measures are being taken to restore normal conditions as rapidly as possible".

On September 23, Narasimhan reported: "The Nizam of Hyderabad tonight broadcast a statement from Hyderabad Radio announcing that he had dissolved all Hyderabad delegations sent out by the Laik Ali Ministry to foreign countries and added: 'I warn Muslims all over the world not to be victims of interested propaganda' In the course of his broadcast, the second in his lifetime and addressed to leaders and friends in Islamic countries, the Nizam placed before the world 'the true facts of the Hyderabad situation'".

"The Nizam said: 'The group with Kasim Razvi at its head had by methods reminiscent of Hitlerite Germany taken possession of the State and spread terror among all elements of society, Muslims and non-Muslims who refused to bend their knees to them, committing arson and loot on a large scale, particularly on Hindus, and had rendered me completely helpless' The Nizam informed the world that India had restored his freedom to deal with Hyderabad's destinies in a manner consistent with the traditions of the Asafia dynasty and the best interests of Hyderabad. The Nizam roundly denounced Kasim Razvi and his Razakars as a band of terrorists who had forced the Nawab of Chhatari and other Ministers to resign and had thrust the Laik Ali Ministry on him. The Nizam declared he had no fear from the Indian Union."

According to the Special Correspondent, during the protracted negotiations with the Government of India, the Laik Ali Cabinet "seems to have sounded the possibility of obtaining military aid from Pakistan in the event of a showdown with India. I was informed by a reliable source that some weeks before Indian troops entered the State, Mr. Jinnah had assured Mr. Laik Ali that Pakistan would open several fronts against India if Hyderabad held out for two or three weeks. Whether this promise was seriously made or not, it is certain that Laik Ali was hopefully looking forward to Pakistan's aid during the days following September 13. It was in this hope he seems to have declined to submit his resignation despite repeated demands from the Nizam"

Thus ended the story of the Nizam and not many years after, Hyderabad became the capital of Visal Andhra and the Nizam a private citizen enjoying a privy purse and certain privileges which were also to be lost by his successor.

Sri C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, who as Dewan of Travancore, figured for a brief moment as the champion of independence for states and proclaimed Travancore's independence before August 15, 1947, (which story we have dealt with in great detail in an earlier chapter) gave the reasons for the princes' failure in an article which he wrote in *The Hindu's* Independence Day supplement of August 15, 1948. He said: "When the British made up their minds to withdraw from India they did so without previous preparation and their timetable was prepared overnight, so to say. And even after the declaration, there

were statements and promises, rousing an expectation of comparative independence on the part of atleast some of the major states subject only to accession in respect of three subjects. What the rulers did not anticipate, but what Sardar Patel foresaw, was the unleashing of forces which insisted on a speedy attainment of unity and uniformity of political practice throughout India and which were not particularly tender to historical traditions or even to good government as apart from self-government. The time spirit was irresistible and the drama of history unrolled itself and Sardar Patel rode the storm, proving himself to be as an astute judge of human nature and of the potentialities and dispositions of the rulers as a class. What Dalhousie and Canning were unable to do during many years, Sardar Patel achieved in a few months. But such an achievement would have been impossible but for the mental unpreparedness of most of the rulers to meet a situation which they had only imperfectly envisaged and also the rapidly converging and the country-wide demand for responsible Government which would not brook any delay and would not put up with any alternative solution save those advocated under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. As a result with one exception the Indian states have already acceded to the Indian Union and have inaugurated schemes of responsible government. They are bound to be rapidly assimilated in administrative practice with the rest of India in every department of government and not simply in the three subjects as to which accession has taken place. Even those states which have not merged themselves with the Provinces are destined gradually but inevitably to coalesce in fundamentals with the rest of India partly by reason of the influence of the great political parties whose activities cannot be restricted to ill-defined geographical boundaries and partly by the inescapable evolution of a common programme throughout India and lastly owing to the rapid emergence of a feeling not only in the former British Provinces but in the Indian states themselves that the only legitimate role of the Maharajas and Nawabs must be that of pure constitutional monarchs or to put it more candidly, ornamental personalities enjoying a position analogous to that of the king of England whose function has been described as reigning but not ruling".

When the architect of the integration of states, Sardar Patel, passed away in December, 1950, *The Hindu* called him a "titan" whose death was a "tragically grievous blow". "Old as he was", *The Hindu* said, "and in indifferent health, his indomitable spirit had triumphed so often against odds that most people had come to think of him as part of the natural order. He was, one felt, firm and dependable as a rock. And heaven knows the country never needed more sorely a leader of that calibre. In the three short years since Swaraj was won, it has weathered so many shocks and has been able to effect so many revolutionary changes in its internal economy as to have wrested from many, not too well disposed towards us, unwilling admiration for the master spirits who have guided it. And the Sardar was, next only to Mr. Nehru, the man most responsible for the miracle. The hearts of millions will go out to the Prime Minister in sympathy for the irreparable loss of a veteran colleague, the hero of a hundred fights, who had done greatly and suffered greatly with him. Under the matchless lead of the Mahatma, Mr. Patel came of peasant stock and remained a peasant at heart to the end of his days. The common people whom he loved in his strong silent way not only respected but also understood him. He was no

intellectual and his philosophy was an essentially simple one. His loyalty to Gandhiji was no passive thing. It had the invigorating fervour of a religion. Not that he always saw eye to eye with him. Indeed, he was temperamentally very differently built. He was shrewd, practical and slow to form conclusions and he did not place too much reliance on his own intuition. In many ways his qualities were admirably complementary to those of the Mahatma. In the latter he recognised not only a leader who could profoundly move the minds of men but also a spiritual power of the first magnitude which could illumine and transform the whole being. And from the first moment of their association he fashioned himself with conscientious thoroughness as the steel-arm of resurgent India. The building up of the Congress into a formidable fighting machine was largely his work. The Bardoli satyagraha showed the world how mighty a weapon the non-violence of the strong could be. But the Sardar had none of the weakness of the ideologue, he was not wedded to any strategy for its own sake. When Swaraj brought new trials and new opportunities he showed an amazing aptitude for the tasks of Government which men who had made a lifetime business of administration envied. It was largely due to his patience, tolerance and personal domination in the counsels of the party that while on the one hand he was able to win the confidence of the old bureaucracy and secure its willing co-operation, he was on the other successful in adopting the unexciting but exacting demands of constructive work to a political party fashioned for other ends. His attitude to the question of partition was in a way typical of the manner in which he approached the problems that confronted Indian statesmanship at that critical hour. He did not like it but rather than see the country distracted by endless wrangles he agreed to partition in order that we could bend our energies to making up the leeway of many centuries. In setting about the herculean task of integrating the 600 odd princely states into the political structure of India he showed equal realism. In the popular imagination he achieved a reputation for ruthlessness which has tended to throw into the shade other and more humane qualities which had not less to do with his extraordinary success. He had a genuine faith in the saving virtues of tradition and was tactful and considerate in his personal dealings with princes whose pride of ancestry he respected. . . India has still a long and hard way to go before she can rest. The need for the type of leadership which Sardar Patel exemplified is likely to be more and more insistently felt. Assailed by conflicting ideologies, trying desperately to avoid being drawn into the impending clash between rival power blocs, she will require all the grit, the resource, the capacity for hard work and the bedrock sanity which her statesmen can muster. And the Congress itself, if it is to continue to play a great part in the national life, will have to evolve into a well-knit party of the centre that can hold the balance between tradition and innovation and harness all creative talent wherever it may be found in the cause of a genuine Indian renaissance. The Sardar's guidance and inspiration in the days to come would have been invaluable. He is gone but his heroic achievement remains to remind us of what strength of will and one pointed devotion to the public interest can do".

**A**S THE CONSTITUENT Assembly concluded its labours in framing a constitution for India in October, 1949 and it came for a second reading before the Assembly, The Hindu doubted the wisdom of introducing adult franchise at that stage of the nation's progress. It said "Our new constitution is, like far too many houses that are built without previous planning by amateur builders who think as they go, plentifully strewn with the wreck of improvisations killed by after thoughts. History was in a sense responsible for this. The Constituent Assembly began its labours before partition was accepted and that major fact made invalid many of the basic assumptions with which the Assembly had started its work. Even after the draft constitution was presented last February major changes in it became inevitable because of the kaleidoscopic rapidity with which changes were effected in the political landscape . . . Whether in spite of the fact that it cannot be easily fitted into the recognised categories this constitution will wear well time alone can show. We have travelled far from the days when the R.T.C. greeted the princes' declaration in favour of a federal government for India as a divinely inspired solution. But the new federal constitution has not altogether discarded federal features and some of these may be found in the future to be useful handles by those who favour provincial and linguistic particularisms. If in the actual working amendment should be found necessary a government which has sufficient authority can effect it without too great difficulty; and that is as it should be. In the long run almost any constitution can be made to work if a sufficiently strong sense of national cohesion and purpose has grown up. The strong tendency towards centralisation which people have praised or criticised as it accorded with their own personal leanings can certainly be justified on the ground that in the past 20 years there has been in the name of autonomy a violent swing to the other extreme. This was partly a reaction against the concentration of power which bureaucratic absolutism under British rule represented. But it was no less due to the fact that the vastness and diversity of the country and the lack of education of the vast mass of the people inevitably limited their horizon and trained their impulses of loyalty towards local and tangible ends. The reversal of this trend which has been inaugurated by the new constitution and particularly emphasised in the revolutionary act represented by the merger and unionisation of states, still requires to be implemented by the growth of

appropriate thought habits among the people. Given the opportunity to evolve without distractions and guided intelligently the emergence in full development of what is still a nation *in posse* is only a matter of time. But it has to be recognised that there are powerful influences militating against that orderly development. Movements of an ideological character which are powerfully influencing the whole Asiatic continent represent all nationalism as reactionary and seek to fire the imagination of the masses by advocating economic shortcuts. While such movements have made little or no impression on peoples who have a long tradition of national freedom they have found more or less uncritical acceptance among backward races suddenly freed from age-long feudal fetters. So far as India is concerned there are many elements in the new philosophies that are profoundly repugnant to her genius. But their fascination for sections of the intelligentsia is not to be denied. The introduction of adult franchise is bound to lead to strenuous attempts on the part of these sections to secure wholesale conversions to new gospels. It will not be an easy thing for the common people, defenceless in their ignorance, to resist plausible sophisters who beckon them to the promised land. Those who counsel moderation and commonsense will inevitably be handicapped. There is a growing realisation that in plumbing for adult franchise we have bitten more than we can chew. Nothing will be lost by postponing this tremendous and hazardous experiment for a few years; meanwhile every effort could be made by intensive education to fit the people for their great responsibilities and to bring about fairly stable conditions in the country. From this point of view a general election under the present restricted franchise could with advantage have been held simultaneously with the introduction of the new constitution."

When the draft constitution was finally adopted in November, 1949, The Hindu said, "Time may show that in some ways the constitution has gone further in the direction of centralisation than may be compatible with the fullest regional and cultural autonomy. But that kind of mistake, if a mistake is shown to have been made, can be rectified without causing an upheaval, whereas it would have been an act of irresponsibility if the Assembly had ignored the baleful possibilities of giving fissiparous tendencies their head of which the events of 1947 gave us so bitter a foretaste".

The Hindu said, "Nobody claims that the constitution is perfect or even that it is the best that could have been devised if all the talent and patriotism theoretically available in the country could have been harnessed to the task". Noting that besides the Congress a "useful minority of men who do not belong to the Congress but who are generally in sympathy with the vision which the Congress has cherished of the future" had been associated with the work of making the constitution, The Hindu said, "If in spite of the conscientious and prolonged labours of so many men of goodwill there are to be discerned in the product elements of patchwork, unresolved contradictions and imperfectly apprehended trends it can only be set down to the confusion of ideologies which is characteristic of our age and for coping with which we are as a people even less well prepared than the nations which have long enjoyed political freedom".

The Hindu cautioned men who claimed to be leaders and intellectuals that they had a special responsibility "for safeguarding our newly enfranchised masses who are too little prepared for the burden that is being placed upon

them against the temptation to run after political mystagogues and imposters. The common man, unlike the handful of the intelligentsia, has still his roots in a great tradition of patience, tolerance and gentleness. While he must be helped to come into his own politically and economically, he must not lose his precious spiritual heritage."

The Hindu wrote after the first general elections in 1952. "What we have seen of adult franchise in operation has not in any way diminished our misgivings as to its suitability circumstanced as the vast mass of Indians are today". The Hindu said: "Adult franchise has brought into the sunlight a new stratum and new techniques are needed to establish contact with it. The traditional leadership of this mass, caste, communal, religious, has still a powerful hold over it, as it alone speaks a language which its followers understand. It is by corrupting their leadership that extremism hopes to gain its ends. By the same token it is these people who must be got at by the constructive parties. They may be illiterate but they are generally shrewd in matters that directly affect them and they will readily respond if honest and disinterested guidance is forthcoming".

The Hindu urged late in 1949 that, with the inauguration of the new constitution, the Congress would have to, if it was to maintain its primacy in shaping the future of free India, "develop mainly as a centre party which can rally that floating free opinion which is the life breath of democracies, by the broad range of its sympathies and the constructive character of the programme it puts forward". The Hindu said India had been declared a secular state "but those who uphold this dimly apprehended ideal do not see the inconsistency of such a state promoting measures for the reform of the personal law of particular religious groups; whereas a civil state should leave to the members of the community concerned to persuade the majority of their fellows to agree to such modifications and reforms as may seem necessary, leaving it to the State merely to register such agreed changes. In regard to such a matter as nationalisation of industries even our short experience of the past two years has served to show that there are virtues in gradualism and that forms of economic organisation which posit a high degree of education and public spirit for their successful working may merely result in unsettlement and inefficiency if introduced in a society so backward as ours is. At the same time in our eagerness to make up the tremendous leeway we must not make the mistake of supposing that regimentation and compulsion can do the trick. There is no royal road to advancement except education, the education of the public in the duties and responsibilities of citizenship and the education of the men it puts into power in the exercise of that power with intelligence, moderation and scrupulous honesty".

In February, 1950, The Hindu criticised the spate of legislation which marked the birth of freedom. "With the beginning of wholly untrammelled popular rule in August, 1947, the country has been treated to an orgy of legislation covering every conceivable subject. This was no doubt actuated by the best of intentions but the net effect has been to discourage rather than promote public confidence. The desire on the part of the Congress to redeem its pledges led to the adoption of programmes without sufficient examination of their practicability or their likely repercussions. Too often, violent and blundering hands were laid on the complex socio-economic fabric of one of the oldest of human societies. Grandiose programmes of development were vigorously debated

while pertinent doubts as to their financing were frowned upon. A time-table for the nationalisation of industries was portentously laid down though most of the industries that were proposed to be nationalised were still to be born. The approach to the problem of agricultural development was incredibly amateurish. On the one hand it was proclaimed that production should be increased in every possible way; on the other the provinces were allowed to compete with one another in rushing through ill-considered reforms of tenure based on ideological considerations which have without a doubt added to the confusion and uncertainty in the country and thus made it impossible even to maintain the old rate of production, let alone increase it. Social reform, without counting the cost and leaving intractable human nature out of account, led to large-scale evasion of the law, while the gains are yet to be seen".

The Hindu while discussing Capital-Labour relations expressed the view that "judged by world standards labour here is inefficient and wasteful. So long as its quality and organisational discipline do not improve, experiments like profit sharing, which are being but tentatively tried even in advanced industrial societies, might lead merely to such absurdities as the allotment referred to by Sardar Patel of Rs. 40 lakhs as bonus out of a gross profit of Rs. 57 lakhs made by the textile mills of Madhya Pradesh. The consumer may well grumble that he is being ground between the upper millstone of capital and the nether mill-stone of labour".

Commenting on Jawaharlal Nehru's report to the A.I.C.C. on the working of Congress Governments in the centre and states in 1951, The Hindu said "To say that the Congress favours middle of the road democracy does not take us very far. Mr. Nehru recognises that much of the failure of the Congress and some at least of the suffering of the people are due to the fact that in the first flush of success it bit more than it could chew, that its ambition outmatched the resources of the country in money and in trained human material. An ancient people cannot be hustled or have a wholly unfamiliar pattern of life imposed upon them from above without reacting to it in listless passivity or sullen resentment. And that in fact is what has happened. If the Congress is to profit by its past mistakes it should be realistic. There is no point in denouncing as 'vested interests' all who plead for a measure of stability and continuity. Nor is anything to be gained by trying to perpetuate the stage of political evolution which was represented by the Congress functioning as a great national forum. Mr. Nehru's desire to get back into the Congress old comrades who have now drifted apart will be understood and it may be readily conceded that there will be much scope for co-operation between progressive parties in a country where much leeway has to be made up. But it seems to us that it is much more necessary that where sharp points of difference have emerged they should not be ignored or glossed over. It would be far better if the Congress resolved to function as a purely political party relying on its inherent strength to promote it to the position of *primus inter pares*. The first condition of success of a political party is that it must be manned by intelligent, educated and public spirited men. It was the failure to insist on the highest quality in the personnel the Congress chose for manning the legislatures and the Ministries that has been responsible for the lowering of its prestige and for such internal dissensions as came to a head in East Punjab".



The selection of Congress candidates for the legislatures and the Ministries referred to by *The Hindu* was the subject of an editorial in January, 1957. The *Hindu* observed that the selection of Congress candidates for the Central and state elections had caused resentment in Congress ranks and added "It must seem a little puzzling to those long experienced in the working of Parliamentary democracy that the Congress should still be obsessed even if only in a negative way, with such considerations as a person's sex, religion, community or sub-community, when the object in view should be to put up for election the best men and women available and willing to stand on the Congress ticket. While a particular candidate's electoral pull is a factor which no political party can be wholly expected to ignore it would be a travesty of all political principles to give the ticket on the plea that they have local pull or money to spend to persons whose record and published opinions show that they have very little in common with the proclaimed policies and objectives of the Congress or the Gandhian code of behaviour it has repeatedly avowed its intention to uphold. Of the new men who have been given the Congress ticket a substantial number are regarded as being rabid communalists who have made no secret of their class and caste animus and separatist ambitions. That these new nominees have been vocal in their admiration of the Chief Minister naturally does not seem sufficient reason in the eyes of loyal Congressmen for ignoring their real character or their motive in wishing to infiltrate into the Congress."

The *Hindu* had some years earlier criticised the Congress Ministry in Madras for introducing the communal element in the services and in the sphere of education. It wrote in March, 1949 that the Congress Ministry in Madras was "incompetent". It wanted to know why the Ministry was in such haste to rush through the Zamindari abolition bill when the Central Government had advised it to go slow and told it that the Centre would not be able to give financial help for payment of compensation. "The only tangible result has been", it said, "to unsettle agrarian conditions in large tracts of the country and to encourage lawless elements, as the Minister himself confessed, to squat on Zamindari lands and do other unlawful things taking advantage of the prevailing chaos". The *Hindu* asked: "If, as our Ministers are so anxious to make out, the Government are keen upon remaining true to Congress ideals and to follow in the footsteps of the Government of India, why have they blatantly taken a communal attitude in regard to recruitment to the services and admission to educational institutions? Mr. Gopala Reddi (Minister) declared the other day that the Madras Government were not prepared to follow the Government of India in this matter. And, as for following the Congress policy, he seemed to have so little belief in it that he assumed a little too readily that other Congressmen were equally cynical. He challenged the critics of the Government to see whether they could persuade the various provincial Congress committees in the province to denounce the communal G.O. We are not for a moment prepared to concede that the Congress in this province has so grossly departed from a fundamental principle to which it had pledged itself from the beginning. But if Mr. Gopala Reddi and his colleagues are so sure that the electorate in this province has become so rabidly communal as the Ministry has shown itself to be, the proper thing is for them to dissolve the legislature and hold an election on this issue. So long as that is not done a very heavy responsibility rests on the Congress Legislature Party to see that the

administration of the province is not allowed, in the name of the Congress, to pursue policies which are not only repugnant to all that the Congress has stood for in the past but which are bound gravely to prejudice the future of the province. The reputation of Madras has sadly suffered as a result of incompetent leadership. The Legislature Party has now an opportunity to set matters right by a thorough overhaul of the Ministry. What is wanted is a Ministry that will not be afraid of pursuing a progressive, robustly non-communal and informed policy that would make for the emergence of a strong and united nation instead of promoting class and caste antagonisms."

The Hindu, however, was fighting a losing battle. The communal G. O. in Madras was the sheet-anchor of successive Congress Ministries and their non-Congress successors.

The Hindu in another editorial warned the Congress that its backbone under Gandhi's leadership was the small urban middle class and the large class of petty landowners. "While every section of the community has been affected by the economic difficulties which came as the aftermath of the war, it is these classes that have had to bear the brunt of the trouble. And some at least of the provincial governments have in their zeal for implementing the Congress pledges and taking the wind out of the sails of leftist parties sought to put into effect hastily improvised policies which have hit the aforementioned classes severely. Nor should it be forgotten that while it might be possible during a crisis in national affairs for a great personality to enthuse a whole people to superb heights of altruistic idealism it is bread and butter considerations that sustain the common man in his work-a-day life. . . . The Congress in India may yet find its metier as a great centre party which pins its faith on reform not revolution and yet retains enough of its national character and its belief in non-violence to be able to act as a reconciler between the more extreme elements."

The Hindu pointed out that many of the difficulties of the Congress were not of its seeking but were the result of inheriting an administrative machine which had begun to creak and groan long before the war came to put upon it a strain which it could not stand. "At the same time it must be said that the wobbling policies of the governments in regard to such matters as nationalisation have been responsible for creating a feeling of uncertainty. Their handling of subversive elements such as the communists has not been such as to put heart into those who have suffered from the large-scale disorders. Here again an excessive regard for ideological considerations has been responsible for the failure to display judicious firmness in time".

"Production is the need of the hour", The Hindu told Congress leaders, "and production can be achieved only by hard sustained work. . . . Our leadership has so far been dazzled by the magnitude of the task. But the various governments are haltingly and with many mistakes discovering that a small beginning is better than ambitious paper plans. It is also to be hoped that they will learn before much mischief is done, that the secret of success is not to disperse your strength and not to set in motion impulses which cancel out each other. Thus if we are to concentrate on production it is only commonsense that we should not at the same time rudely shatter the fabric of economic relations by launching on what is vaguely envisaged as "socialism" though it has no recognisable affinity with the genuine brand. Instead of flourishing quack remedies in the

face of the poor, those who aspire to top leadership, must set an example of sobriety, honesty and hard work".

When India was proclaimed a Republic on January 26, 1950, The Hindu said it "amounts to an implicit pledge on the part of every Indian that he will to the extent of his strength and capacity uphold the honour of his country, augment her strength for good, and persuasively convey to a distracted world her immemorial message of *abhaya*. A democratic republic which is what our constitution aims to build is one in which the worth of the individual is not submerged in the collective will but sustains it. In such a polity no man may walk on crutches or regard public business as no concern of his. Every citizen must remember that if matters go wrong with the state it is he that is ultimately responsible. He must therefore not only acquire by study enough familiarity with the working of the machinery of Government through which Democracy functions, he must understand the basic problems which have to be tackled if the good life is to be realised here and now. He must have the strength of character which alone is a nation's capital. And above all he must have the will to put his shoulder to the wheel and push and pull, never getting out of step with his fellows, never succumbing to the temptation to find scapegoats".

The Hindu said: "We have had too many things to do. And we have tried to do too many things at a time. Trained capacity has not matched with ambition. Power went to the head of too many who had done little to generate it but who swarmed to it as flies to sugar. The sharing of responsibility is a spiritual process for which men must devoutly prepare themselves. The greatest lack that Swaraj has revealed is that behind the band of brilliant patriots who under the Mahatma's lead won freedom there has been built up practically no second line of defence, phalanx of younger statesmen to whom the torch could be handed without a flicker and in whose hands it might be trusted to burn as bright as ever. For Republican India it is as necessary as it was for India struggling to be free to keep the crusading spirit alive. Only the crusade must be turned against the enemy within".

When amendments to the Constitution were proposed in April, 1951 to overcome judicial decisions in respect of some controversial legislation The Hindu pointed out that the stability of the country was being endangered by such hasty action. The four main amendments proposed related to (1) Zamindari abolition (2) restriction of the right of individual to practise any trade or profession in order to enable schemes of nationalisation to be undertaken (3) overcoming the Supreme Court decision that the Madras Government's Communal G.O. was against the constitution and (4) curbing the freedom of the Press.

"It is true", The Hindu said, "that the proposed amendments are being undertaken on the ground that a number of judicial decisions have put a construction upon some of the fundamental rights which according to the Government the framers of the Constitution had not anticipated. It is true that the judicial decisions militate against the implementation of policies to which the Congress, which played a leading part in framing the Constitution, has long committed itself. But to admit this is not to admit the rightness or the propriety of attempting to introduce amendments in haste to get over the difficulties arising from the judicial decisions. It is barely a year since the constitution came into operation. It cannot be said it was vamped up in a hurry.

Some of the finest legal brains in the country worked upon it continually and the written constitutions of many of the most democratic countries in the world were examined for light on particular problems. It was after considerable debate that it was decided that fundamental rights should be incorporated in the Constitution itself. The general opinion in the country was that these rights were defined, if anything, too narrowly and with too many restrictive qualifications. If in spite of all this caution it is found that much controversial legislation adopted by the Central and state legislatures is vitiated by incompatibility with the rights of the citizen as laid down in the Constitution it must not be too lightly assumed that the fault lies in the Constitution. An explanation that would be far nearer the truth is that Government in exercising the power of legislation has been so obsessed by its sense of urgency of social objectives that it has paid too little attention to what is due to the individual. As constitution-maker and as law-maker it has allowed its mind to function in watertight compartments. The essence of democracy is that when a law has been adopted after the fullest debate it should not be lightly interfered with even if it should be found unsatisfactory in certain respects. For the sense of continuity on which any stable society must rest may be rudely disturbed by a too restless quest of legislative perfectionism. The argument gains in strength a hundredfold when the law in question is the fundamental law of the realm. It is a matter that is singularly unfitted for party legislation. If the party in power today can bring itself to change in important respects a constitution which is so largely of its own making and which has not been in existence long enough to show whether it is seaworthy or not, what is there to prevent other parties which may come into power tomorrow from scrapping other parts of it or even the whole of it? In fact, both the Communists and Socialists have been going about threatening to do just this if and when they have the power. We are not for a moment suggesting that the Constitution should be regarded as sacrosanct for all time. All that we are concerned to stress is that constitutional change is something that is not safely attempted under the stress of strong political emotion or without prolonged investigation of the national as distinct from the party reactions to the change proposed. A Parliament which came into existence in extraordinary circumstances and for a very different purpose, which has had no opportunity so far of ascertaining through the recognised method of a general election the measure of popular support behind its policies would be singularly ill-advised to restrict the rights of the citizen in the name of the people, especially after the Supreme Court which is vested with the sole right to interpret the Constitution has upheld the individual's rights. The proper time for considering an amendment of the Constitution would be after the general election in which a mandate may be legitimately sought on the major policies on which the proposals for amendment hinge . . . On the one hand the Congress Party itself is by no means so united as it was in the days before the transfer of power when it first put these planks on its platform. And in the actual trial some of these policies for example, Prohibition, have been found so difficult in the working and so meagre in the results that today there is a considerable cooling of ardour in the Congress camp itself. On the other hand, adult franchise will for the first time, bring to the polls millions whose views on major issues supposing they have any are yet to be ascertained . . . The attempt to amend the constitution in a hurry must be regarded as contrary

to the spirit of the democratic republic which the framers of the constitution aimed to establish"

When the Constitution amendment bill was introduced in Parliament in May, 1951 by Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Hindu* wrote: "In a country precariously poised on the edge of confusion, it is only commonsense that stability should not be tampered with. And nothing can be more unsettling than a widespread impression that if the interpretation of the constitution by the Courts should not be acceptable to the Executive or should be contrary to the latter's interpretation, the constitution should be changed forthwith" *The Hindu* said: "The Prime Minister, to our mind, has not succeeded in establishing the need, much less the urgency of such a measure as this. He says the Government have no intention of asking Parliament to exercise any of the considerable powers which they wish to put within its power to take. It has rightly been pointed out that if there is no present necessity there can be no justification for tampering with fundamental rights especially when the general election is near at hand. . . It is too late in the day to contend that the conception of fundamental rights is outmoded and that the egalitarian society which we are vowed to bring about might require the abrogation of these rights according to the discretion and judgment of the Government of the day. If this criterion were systematically to be applied none of the fundamental rights might ultimately survive. The Prime Minister laid much emphasis on the consideration that the safeguarding of the citizen's rights might mean the perpetuation of present inequalities. This presumes that every government in trying to modify and subtract from the rights of the individual would be actuated solely by the desire to redress the injustices of the past or to help those whom circumstances have handicapped. But governments, especially when they are run on party lines, are prone to promote by the exercise of the state power the interests of their party which may or may not be identical with the interests of society as a whole. That apart, the idea in providing fundamental rights was to safeguard the rights of minorities against trespass either by the majority or by the Government which it has put into office. To the extent that Parliament is itself controlled by a party majority it could not be allowed to make short work of minority rights. That was the rationale of the fundamental rights chapter."

Referring to the amendment dealing with the Press, *The Hindu* said. "Mr. Nehru's contention that it is merely an enabling measure is beside the point. In that sense the entire constitution is only an enabling measure. And his attempt to show that the Government have no intention of using this power to forge new fetters and will not do so unless some unforeseen emergency arises, overlooks the fact that quite a large number of galling restrictions on the freedom of the Press, which were an unblest legacy of British rule, but which the courts have held to be repugnant to the constitution and void, will be revived and become effective for mischief if the amendment should be adopted. And we cannot help feeling that the Prime Minister in saying that these powers are needed to curb the irresponsible Press overrates at once the capacity for mischief of this section of the Press and the effectiveness of any legislative curbs thereupon. It is on the co-operation and good sense of the Press as a whole – which Mr. Nehru agrees is quite sound – that the Government must rely to keep the bad fringe in order. But the Government are not exactly helping the responsible Press in this task by making it

defenceless against arbitrary authority. Nor is he right in assuming that democratic Governments elsewhere have and exercise the authority to control the Press in the name of maintaining friendly relations with foreign powers. Even in the most acute phases of two world wars the government of Great Britain never presumed to tell the British Press what it must say or must not say. An occasional friendly request may have been made, but papers which chose to ignore it were at perfect liberty to do so. Neither a free press nor a true democracy can work otherwise".

The Hindu was unhappy with the trend of Congress policy in political, economic and social fields and on February 23, 1957, on the eve of the second general elections, it wrote "The Congress stands to gain by losing some of its adipose tissue. With 45 per cent of the votes polled it gained 70 per cent of the seats at the last elections. And part at least of its voting strength was supplied by elements which had very little in common with it ideologically. A repetition of this cannot be healthy either for the party itself or for the country. A Congress party with a smaller but more compact and politically well-knit majority would in fact be a stronger party. And this might open the way for a real opposition to emerge".

The Hindu did not want the voter to vote for the Congress candidate merely because he had the Congress ticket. The paper pointed out that in Madras the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D. M. K.) had emerged as a major contestant with the largest number of candidates of all the organised parties other than the Congress and also the fact that the Dravida Kazhagam (D. K.) had offered support to the Congress. "The D. K. supports the Congress", The Hindu wrote "not because it is the Congress, but because, as the D.K. leader has explained, the Congress candidates are 'Mr. Kamaraj's men' and so can be depended upon to serve the D. K. aims. The Congress leadership in this state has not thought it fit unequivocally to declare that it does not want such support and would repudiate it. It is therefore hardly surprising that other parties too are content to take such support as comes their way and ask no questions. But this all out expediency as the supreme virtue in politics can be gravely demoralising. The voter must be wary against these pre-electoral adjustments avowed or tacit. He must scrutinise for himself the past record of every candidate involved in such deals. If their present professions are opposed to their past practices he should not accept, on the assurance of anybody however exalted, that there has been purgation or a change of heart. Eleventh hour conversions are always suspect".

The Hindu referred to the D.M.K. which wanted a further division of the country and was "besides as rabid in its communal and sub-communal antipathies as the D.K. who have been twitting each other with having no purpose except Brahmin baiting". It said: "But nobody is likely to accept on its face value their professed anxiety to function as purely political parties though on opposite sides of the fence. The Congress Government in this state was consistently remiss in checking their hate campaigns. And the leadership has gone further and allowed a good deal of infiltration of these communal elements into the Congress ranks. If the candidates drawn from these recent additions are decisively rejected by the electorate that will be a service to the country and a badly needed corrective to political opportunism".

The Hindu also stressed that it was an important duty of the voter at this juncture "to look out for and nurture such little promise as there is of independent thinking and concern for the basic liberties of the people. The Constitution has been amended seven times in the last seven years and almost every one of these amendments has aimed at a drastic curtailing of the individual's rights and liberties. This casual attitude towards the Constitution stems from the unconscious assumption that the ruling party knows what is good for the people better than they themselves do."

The Hindu said "It is in the interest of political stability that non-socialist opinion too should have some voice in the legislature as it has not today. It ought to be the concern of all voters particularly of those who do not believe that socialism is the panacea, that uncommitted men of character who will not enter into exigent post-election compromises but will boldly put the non-socialist viewpoint are returned in appreciable numbers. From such beginnings a real opposition can grow in time"

The results of the General elections showed that the Congress had been returned to power in the Centre and in most of the states including Madras where it captured 70 per cent of the seats. But in Kerala the communists were returned as the largest party and they were in a position to form a Government with the support of Independents. The Hindu advised the Congress it must "see the folly of pursuing to the logical conclusion the dubious policy of 'taking the wind out of the sails' of the communists. It has to demonstrate by its own record that it does not lend countenance to actions and measures inspired by ill-digested doctrinaire notions which will provide an example and a pretext for the Communist Government in Kerala. When the Chief Minister of Madras told audiences in Tanjore the other day that the Madras Government if they liked could take over all the lands in Tanjore overnight by an ordinance, he was certainly not setting an example to the communists of sobriety in thought and expression and respect for the principle of fair dealing without which democracy perishes".

When the Swatantra party was formed by C. Rajagopalachari in June, 1959, The Hindu said it was a reaction to the tendency to totalitarianism found in the country. "There is risk", it said, "of the progressive and orderly development of Democracy being impeded by attempts to represent honest differences of opinion on national affairs as being tantamount to disrupting national unity. Indeed it is this tendency to equate national unity with one political party, albeit the biggest in the country at the moment, which lends colour to the apprehension that there is today a drift towards totalitarianism and statism. It is not surprising therefore that there is a growing feeling that this must be stopped by the restoration of the right of free discussion and of free expression of individual viewpoints which is of the essence of democracy and which is in no way inconsistent with national unity. The formation of a new party (even if it be a conservative party) in furtherance of this objective should not be a cause of sadness or alarm even among those who may not agree with its programmes and policies".

The Hindu said: "The new party offers a straight challenge to the Congress Programme of socialism but not entirely in the conventional conception of conservatism associated in popular mind with reaction and *laissez faire*. It affirms that the individual and his individuality in respect of his civil and

economic rights and status could and should be preserved in a democracy and that this is quite compatible with the advance of the community as a whole. It believes that social justice and social welfare could be attained without depriving the individual of his swatantra. In the context of adult franchise and the liberal promises of the millenium held out to the hungry (because mostly unemployed and poverty-ridden) masses by the older parties which hold the field today in varying degrees the new party has an arduous and uphill road to travel before it succeeds in convincing the majority of the electorate that it is possible to achieve the greatest good of the greatest number through its programmes and policies. But with a leader of Mr. Rajagopalachari's stature at its helm the new party starts at a premium."

Early in the following year (1960), *The Hindu* wrote that the Swatantra party's "major problem will be not so much in canalising the widespread discontent that has been aroused by the various measures of the ruling party but in convincing a substantial section of the electorate about the merits of its alternative programme. It has undoubtedly displayed courage in frankly challenging the current socialistic trends of official policy. In calling for the scrapping of the Planning Commission and for the repeal of the amendments to the Constitution abridging the fundamental rights guaranteed under the original statute the party has raised challenging issues which will be hotly debated in the coming months. It will be an eminently healthy process for our infant Democracy if these questions are discussed dispassionately and the ultimate implications of decisions taken in a hurry are fully thrashed out".



**T**HE HINDU DEVOTED considerable space in the period immediately after independence to economic issues and the policy pursued by the Nehru Government. It was particularly concerned to emphasise the role of private industry and criticise the "disastrous" policy of drawing away manpower from agriculture to industry.

The Hindu said in July, 1951, that the "slogan 'nationalise and again nationalise' may be attractive to those who have their eyes glued on to what is happening in some distant land, but you cannot run before you can walk. The country has neither the level of public education, nor the trained body of public servants, nor again that tradition of industry which in other countries where liberty is valued have taken a century or two to build up".

The Hindu said on another occasion. "The paramount need for increasing the production of wealth and for the steady pursuit of a policy which aims at reducing disparities in the sharing of that wealth without throwing the country's economy out of gear, will be generally conceded. But there may be legitimate doubts as to how far these objectives can be achieved by comprehensive planning accompanied in large measure by State ownership, management or control. 'Communism for all its triumphs in many fields crushes the free spirit of man', says Mr. Nehru finely. In a primitive economy like ours, with a large leeway to make up a certain amount of regimentation may not be avoidable. But direction and control by the State over large sectors of industry can achieve the object in view only if it can bring to the task a high degree of administrative efficiency and technical skill. Of these there are very few signs so far. Again planned industrialisation has generally counted on a high degree of mobility in labour and on the availability of a large industrial proletariat. But though in recent decades the town has rapidly grown at the expense of the country ours is still predominantly a rural population which looks upon agriculture as its mainstay. . . . Because of our meagre capital resources industrial growth is bound to be a slow and painful business; and any premature drawing off of a large number from the land may merely result in adding to urban destitution which in its effect on society might be far more demoralising than even distress farming. . . . In a country circumstanced as India is the public interest requires that all the energy and enterprise that may be available in every class should be tapped. Distrust of private enterprise while it may be

justified in countries where it has grown to such vast proportions that inevitably its predatory character is emphasised, may in India have the untoward effect of nipping industrialisation in the bud. In agriculture large-scale state intervention in the shape of extinguishing or modifying rights in property, controlling farming practice and regimenting the people's way of life from *a priori* considerations may be even more disastrous".

The Hindu wrote in January, 1952: "If inflation was the major menace in the post-war period the Government's measures to fight it have been half-hearted and ineffective. Increased production was the compelling need of the hour but the Government's continually shifting policy in regard to import and export controls, price and production regulations and the divergent statements by Ministers, holding out alternately threats of nationalisation of private industries and assurances of government help have nearly conspired to paralyse private enterprise in the country. Private industry moreover has had to cope with a spate of hasty and ill-digested industrial legislation which, however admirable in theory has imposed on an industrial structure, that has hardly found its feet burdens it could not bear".

The Hindu said "The truth is there is no simple remedy for the grave economic problems we confront. There are limits to State action and quite definite limits to the improvements which can be effected by State ownership or management. The wise rule for the Government would be to limit the fields of its own direct management to the narrowest confines and to leave as wide a field as possible to private initiative and enterprise. The Planning Commission's report shows in fact that in the circumstances of the country the field open to private sector must inevitably be large. If the limits of private industry are recognised the Government's obligations to intervene should be defined by clear and paramount obligations of public interest. Gross abuses in industry must be prevented and minimum standards in regard to labour conditions have to be ensured. But beyond these fairly defined and narrow limits the Government's objective should be to leave industry to develop freely and to help within the means in its power to mitigate the factors operating to restrict production".

On the eve of the Avadi Congress session, in January, 1955, The Hindu wrote: "Talk of a socialist pattern of society has recently been very much in the air. Mr. Nehru couples it with the welfare state as the twin objectives which the Congress since it opted for independence has implicitly accepted. He holds that the Congress may clarify these objectives in the present session but that will not mean a departure from its creed. This assurance may satisfy the criticism that has been voiced by the Sarvodaya Group against the proposal to affirm socialism as the goal on the ground that that would be a narrowing of the more comprehensive Sarvodaya ideal. . . . And talking of socialism, the question will naturally be asked how the Congress objective will be different from that which other parties labelling themselves socialists have set before themselves. Mr. Nehru has discounted the importance of the communist, communal and Praja Socialist parties and has bluntly questioned the bonafides of some of them. That apart the Marxist approach favoured by the official Socialist party can be hardly reconciled with Mr. Nehru's conception of what the right socialist approach should be. He realises that there can be no socialism on the basis of a pauper economy, that production

is the key to progress. He no doubt takes the view that 'where there is a conflict of interest the good of the people as a whole must prevail'. At the same time he thinks it is not necessary to aim at injuring others or to spread the spirit of hatred and violence. Taking this stand it should not be difficult for him to see that the amendments to the Constitution he has placed before Parliament cannot be easily reconciled with that stand. No doubt his own personal view of private property is that there is no moral justification to it. But he will be the first to recognise that millions of his countrymen do not accept that view. And many of the projects for land reform in the states, for example, can certainly not pass the test of justification on the ground of benefitting society as a whole at the expense of a few. This kind of doctrinaire socialism cannot but sap the foundations of private initiative, make whole classes of intelligent and illustrious citizens lose heart and get submerged in the urban proletariat and thus bring about not increase of production but almost a paralysis of it. The wide vogue which the new slogan of a 'socialistic pattern of society' may acquire can only increase the harm done by the vagueness of its content".

When the Subjects Committee of the Avadi Congress adopted two resolutions whose purport was to declare the socialistic pattern of society as the Congress objective, The Hindu noted that both Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad "were anxious to make it clear that no violent break with the past was contemplated and that the object underlying both the resolutions was not to exalt doctrinaire theories but to find a workable via media between Capitalism and Socialism which would be free from the defects of either, would be in accord with the genius of the people and would promote harmony and cohesion, not hatred and strife. It will be readily granted that if such were indeed the happy issue of the policy which is now being formulated it would be abundantly justified. But we must confess that even after all their elaborate explanation, the primary purpose of the resolutions — to clarify the socio-economic policies which the Congress wishes to pursue vigorously in all ways but particularly through national planning — remains largely unfulfilled. The resolution favouring a socialist pattern of society explains that it will consist of three main strands — social ownership or control of the principal means of production, progressive speeding up of production and equitable distribution of the national wealth. . . For elimination of inequality social ownership or control of the principal means of production is not an inescapable necessity. On the contrary, from the point of view of rapidly increasing production without adopting totalitarian coercion, there is everything to be said for an enlightened policy of encouraging private industry. This, of course, does not mean that the State should not for reasons of practical convenience reserve to itself those strategic industries in which it can by reason of its much vaster resources achieve quicker results. Nor does it mean the State should not exercise over all means of production generally that measure of control which is needed to prod the laggards, to ensure fair conditions for the workers or even to co-ordinate efforts with a view to obviate overlapping and waste. All this is being done today in Britain, for example. And Britain though it has a Labour party which has been in office and may be again, has not achieved national agreement on the question of 'socialism'. In fact though it has nationalised one or two key industries it seems to be in no hurry to seek a

socialistic pattern of society. Maulana Azad gave cogent reasons why nationalisation is no panacea; and British experience seems fully to bear this out. But a far more potent reason which has weighed with countries bred in the democratic tradition, against going in for socialism or for a socialistic pattern is their rooted faith in liberty as the very life breath of democracy. We in India who have accepted the democratic way of life cannot afford to jeopardise that supreme value. It seems to us that in defining its objective as a co-operative commonwealth the Congress constitution was seeking to secure the element of liberty its due place in the people's regard. As for the Indian Constitution which represents not just one party's mind but the collective wisdom of the people as a whole, it prizes liberty, if anything, even more dearly. It defines India as a democratic Republic and it stresses not merely Liberty as coequal with Equality but also Fraternity as something that assumes 'the dignity of the individual' as well as 'the unity of the nation'. In the chapter on the Directive Principles the Constitution outlines some of the characteristic features of the welfare state. But the principle that ownership and control of material resources of the community shall be so distributed as best to subserve the common good can certainly not be construed as necessarily meaning social ownership or control in the sense in which doctrinaire socialists use the terms. Indeed it has been abundantly demonstrated that the common good may be far better subserved by the enlightened policies of Welfare States which give private enterprise a recognised, large and definite place in the economy and not just an indefinite reprieve which is what the Congress resolution would seem to contemplate. The principle that there should be no concentration of wealth to the common detriment, again does not constitute a directive to effect arithmetical distribution of wealth. We have always said and must say it again that the Congress cannot function effectively both as a political party and as a national prime mover. If it gave up this impossible ambition and chose to function purely as a political party it would be able to see the internal contradictions inherent in its omnibus formulation of policy. These may mean all things to all men but in practice must prove ineffective and confusing. If as but one political party among others, it were to proclaim its allegiance to a socialistic pattern of society and social ownership or control of the means of production, those sections of the people who do not believe in these objectives would have no cause to quarrel with the Congress for pursuing those objectives. They might seek to form other parties to forward their own point of view. But Congressmen would be merely deceiving themselves if they imagined that any abridgement of the rights and liberties of any section of the people, which the Government of the day decides on *a priori* considerations, will be accepted as having been effected by peaceful means simply because having an immense parliamentary majority it has been able to push the measure through the legislature. It is legislative coercion of this kind that leaves behind a great sense of wrong which cannot be conducive to that national unity which the constitution prizes. No one wants social injustice to be perpetuated. But in remedying old injustices new injustices should not be done under legal cover. We are glad that the Congress has defined its objective as "equitable distribution of national wealth". It is to be hoped that in promoting amendments to the constitution and legislative measures in furtherance of the

Congress' objectives the Government will scrupulously remember its obligation not to sacrifice equity and liberty while seeking to promote equality. It is to democratic equality that India has pledged herself. Congressmen have an obligation to see that Avadi has not merely added one more misleading slogan to confuse the people."

The Hindu reverted to the same theme when it reviewed the Avadi session of the Congress. It said that the slogan of socialistic pattern of society put on the masthead of the Congress "cannot be regarded as having seriously engaged the public mind, let alone received the stamp of popular approval." The Hindu said there was "ample evidence to show that the implications have not been fully grasped even by the more thoughtful sections of Congress opinion. And the more understanding comes in the more differences are likely to develop too. The leadership spoke most of the time in riddles. Thus while there was the claim made that the Congress at Avadi was making a decisive, nay, historic change of direction, it was also sought to be maintained that it was really nothing new and that the whole thing was implicit in the Congress position from the days of the Karachi session or even earlier. Mr. Nehru pointed out that while a welfare state might be realised without achieving a socialistic pattern of society, there could be no socialism without a welfare state. And he affirmed — without troubling to argue the point — that 'for many reasons' India wanted both a welfare state and a socialistic pattern of society. The logic is not obvious. Britain, as we have observed on previous occasions, has a welfare state without socialism and is doing very well on it. And she is in no hurry to achieve socialism though when she started there was a far more yawning gulf fixed between the haves and the have nots in that country. And as for a socialistic pattern of society being impossible without a welfare state, that again is an unmerited assumption. The Iron Curtain countries are, on the contrary, a lurid example of the possibility that long before socialism is achieved — if at all it ever is — a slave state might result from the decision to drive the people towards doctrinaire socialism conceived and imposed from the top. True, Mr. Nehru and others have painstakingly sought to explain that they are not thinking of that kind of socialism at all, that they contemplate something which will be as distinct from the Marxist Leninist conception of Socialism as from Capitalism. And as a guarantee they stress that the achievement of this *tertium quid* is to be brought about purely by peaceful means. But the effect of this argument is largely annulled by Mr. Nehru's frank admission that there are class conflicts and his quiet repudiation of Sarvodaya economics in favour of a realistic emphasis on large-scale industrialisation".

The Hindu said: "Those who have not given their uncritical allegiance to the Congress whether they are technically within the party or outside it, have got to carry on the debate on the great question of democracy versus socialism to the common people and make them real participants in a decision which so vitally concerns them. Mr. Nehru's instincts are essentially democratic. He realises that the socialism of his dream cannot be realised in a day. He knows that means are no less important than ends. If confronted with the choice between socialism and democracy we have no doubt he would prefer the latter any day. The responsibility lies heavy upon him to see that in the name of socialism the people are not committed to policies which they have not accepted with their minds and which being profoundly repugnant to their most deep seated instincts might only result in a self-stultifying frustration, if not in confusion."

When the new industrial policy was announced in Parliament in May, 1956, The Hindu saw in it a big shift on the eve of a general election "in which economic policy is bound to figure as a major issue". A vast expansion of state enterprise in the industrial field and the continuance of steadily shrinking private sector under conditions of sufferance were twin-features of the new policy. The Hindu declared "Whatever the grounds on which the new policy may be sought to be justified there can be no doubt that it marks a departure from the policy statement of 1948" The Hindu said "If the extension of State Enterprise is to be determined not by doctrinaire considerations but by pragmatic tests of how the public interest can best be served it is clear that in the conditions obtaining in India there should be a cautious and well prepared expansion of public enterprises. That work has been hardly taken up yet. In their anxiety to promote rapid industrialisation, if the Government takes on hand too many state enterprises they may find they have bitten more than they can chew. There is also the danger that such a programme may seriously affect the expansion of the private sector by starving it of capital and other facilities which the Government might divert to their own concerns on the ground of their being entitled to higher priority. The Government resolution claims that a large field has been left to the private sector but the atmosphere of uncertainty and distrust in which it will function will be hardly conducive to healthy or vigorous development. The statement stridently declares: "It is always open to the State to undertake any type of industrial production". While theoretically this may be conceded its practical implications are anything but reassuring. If private industry is not assured equal facilities in regard to raw material, transport etc. as well as a reasonable prospect of operating over a fair period without running the risk of nationalisation or of being "squeezed out" by the State, it is idle to expect the private sector to play its part in industrial expansion. It is well known that the bulk of the expansion in industrial output which occurred in the period of the first five-year plan took place in the private sector. That this happened despite the apprehensions created by the 1948 resolution was due to the fact that the Government's repeated assurances regarding a "mixed economy" were taken on trust. Whether the private sector could act with the same confidence in face of the Government's resolve to extend state industries and trading with the threat of nationalisation in the background and the avowed partiality for co-operatives and cottage industries is highly doubtful. Some consolation may be drawn from the fact that the new statement nowhere mentions nationalisation. It is to be hoped that this means that the Government are more keen on starting new industries than on taking over existing ones".

Discussing the second five-year plan on May 17, 1956, The Hindu said: "While we may reconcile ourselves to the growing importance of the public sector, subject to the continuing vigilance of the public to see that it is efficient and 'delivers the goods', we shall continue to have for a long time to come a wide private sector providing the bulk of the employment and producing the bulk of the consumer goods. Our integrated plans for the development of the country's economy should provide for the growth of the private sector as a legitimate constituent of the nation's economic structure".

The Hindu returned to the topic of the socialist ideology of the Congress and the assault on private property in January, 1957 when it wrote: "The great danger is that by accepting the role of the state as universal controller, director

and source of power and by putting their faith in total planning, the Nehru Government will be strengthening those forces within the vast conglomerate which is the ruling party which favours equality at the expense of Liberty and bureaucracy at the expense of Democracy. The instinct that has kept private property vigorously alive for millenia is a universal instinct, it derives its validity from the objective realisation that it has been the greatest single guarantee of individual freedom. Equalitarianism as an end in itself has been no more acceptable to Indian society than to other traditional societies which distrusted the purpose and disputed the claims of the omniscient and omnipotent state which alone can attempt to enforce such a mechanical equality, largely destroying in the process liberty which has been valued as a greater good. It must not be forgotten that the Congress whose unique place in the affections of the masses is now being seasonally reiterated, won that place not by preaching socialism but by making its own those broad principles of liberal democracy to which the great nations of the West which believe in freedom have remained on the whole faithful".

The Hindu drew the attention of the reader to the fact that the thinking of the Congress leadership on the subject of socialism had been excessively fluid. "On the one hand we have been told that Indian Socialism was to be something *sui generis* firmly grounded in our own tradition and mores. On the other hand, the way in which the leadership has redefined the new goal of the Congress as socialist co-operative Democracy suggests that it aims at something not very different from the kind of Marxian Socialism favoured by the Socialist party in India and British Socialists like Prof. G. D. H. Cole who unlike official Labour think that the Welfare State is not even a satisfactory half-way house to Socialism. Mr. Nehru however maintains without putting forth convincing arguments that the Welfare State is perfectly compatible with Socialism and is in fact included in that ideal".

The Hindu said: "The very virtue of flexibility which the Congress leadership claims for policies defined in painfully balanced terms is only likely to confuse the common man. Thus we are told that we must have heavy industry and also small scale and cottage industries, that centralisation in an industrialising society is inevitable but we must have decentralisation too as far as possible, that we must try to introduce advanced techniques but without affecting the volume of employment, that the rebuilding of our tax structure should aim at both augmenting revenues and reducing disparities. This difficult feat of riding two horses at the same time might perhaps be attempted without a serious risk if there were a live public opinion and alternative parties which could be depended upon to raise the alarm should anything go wrong. In the absence of such safeguards everything would depend upon the way the principle of flexibility is continuously applied to ease stresses and strains and to call off unpromising experiments. One cannot be quite confident that in the present set-up the political control will be incisive enough or the administrative framework strong enough to see that our adventures in uncharted socialism do not land us in a bog".

"So long as restraints on the growth of the private sector are not placed on doctrinaire grounds and the public sector is not unduly favoured in regard to facilities which are equally essential for the functioning of competing private industries", The Hindu wrote in July 1959, "there can be no objection to the

natural expansion of the public sector in the spheres in which it can increase production more quickly and remedy the gaps in the economy. The projects envisaged in the public sector are welcome though the Government would do well to associate leading private industrialists in the preparation of these projects so that there may be no duplication of effort and the projects may be planned along right lines to meet the real needs of Indian industry."

As India entered the 12th year of independence (1958) *The Hindu* was pained at the state of affairs in the country. It saw that the country was faced with the double danger of an administrative and political crack-up and said "The foremost task before the nation's leaders to-day, to whatever party they may belong, and at whatever level they may operate, is to check the forces of disruption and to unify all sections of the people for the formidable constructive tasks that face us in the war against poverty and ignorance. The atmosphere of lawlessness and indiscipline that is steadily seizing hold of the country is the greatest menace to all the hopes of a better life to which millions in the country have looked forward since independence. That serious political agitations should be whipped up over trivial incidents and the excited feelings of sections of the public should be exploited for indulging in attacks on public and private property is a grave reflection on the political leaders to act with responsibility under a democratic system. Our fundamental economic problems are so serious, our development has been so much neglected in the past that the most determined and concerted efforts of all sections of the people will be needed for several decades to make up for the lapses of the past. A vast national effort is called for and the country can ill-afford such luxuries as hartals, strikes and other destructive forms of agitation. In the Indian context today the worst vested interest is the one that seeks to draw the dividends from disorder and violence. Unless this is eliminated we shall be able to make little progress with our economic or other plans".

*The Hindu* laid stress on increasing agricultural production while discussing the five-year plans. It wrote in November, 1958: "Our startling failure to reach the plan's food targets shows that not enough was invested in agriculture. . . The big lesson of our failure on the food front is that industrialisation is not an end in itself. What should be aimed at is the reconstruction of the whole country from the village up. Today we have roads and railways which link the big towns, we have business and industry and education mainly sited in the towns. But if the purchasing power of the villager does not rise the factories cannot sell their goods — as the textile mill industry has realised. The villagers want schools, bridges, markets, improved tools and machines, fertilisers as well as irrigation and electricity. Once they have these they will not be interested in Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan's theory of the self-sufficient village. The order of priority (for obviously all these things cannot be provided at once) is roads, schools and irrigation. Roads have no glamour but without a road no village can sell its surplus. Without schooling (with a practical bias) new methods can scarcely be learned and the villager is at the mercy of the townsman. Without irrigation he is at the mercy of the monsoon. Only 30 per cent of the cultivated land is under irrigation. The steel from our new steel plants must provide the steel for ploughs, irrigation pumps, lanterns, sewing machines, bicycles, buses and bulldozers for the villages as well as for machines to make paper, fertiliser, matches, soap etc. The villages will need



small machines by the million. There are three other essential industries which have been grossly neglected in the last ten years. They are forestry, dairying and fishing. These are in as backward state today as peasant farming. Our planners must therefore decide to invest more of their money in these industries, every plan must of course increase the total output of power, irrigation, steel, cement, coal, oil and other basic materials. But the existing gulf between the village and the town must be crossed if the country is to develop as a whole."

The Hindu pointed out in January, 1960 that the hiatus between expenditure and achievement "is in fact the crucial defect of Indian planning". It pleaded for a fresh approach to planning if they were not to commit the same mistakes as in the past. "It would be realistic", it said, "if Indian planning proceeded on a recognition of the crucial part that must be played by external capital (in all its forms) to maintain a sufficiently high rate of development in the country. The tendency to think of plans in terms of overall figures of outlay and large national targets is resulting in too much of artificial and academic exercises in paper planning – and in fanciful proposals for raising resources – which detract attention from the really important job of preparing concrete programmes of development at various levels based on needs and available resources. The Planning Commission whose ramifications have grown with each successive plan has done little to encourage realistic planning from the bottom. By its constant emphasis on expenditure as an index of development it has tended to create an atmosphere in which the mere spending of money is considered a good thing in itself without regard to the results of such expenditure. The Prime Minister stated the other day that Rs. 900 crores had been spent on agriculture since 1951 but there was little to show for it by way of results".

The Hindu said the hiatus between expenditure and achievement "will not disappear merely by shifting the emphasis from financial targets to physical targets as Prof. Mahalanobis and others urge. The argument that whatever is physically feasible should be financially realisable bypasses the whole gamut of economic reasoning that should determine decisions with regard to physical targets. . . A new approach to planning should be based primarily on maximising the opportunities for productive employment to the entire adult population of the country. Viewed from this angle it could be seen that centralised planning alone will not do the trick in a country of India's size and diversity of conditions. Mixed economy is an inescapable consequence of the political and economic character of the country. The role of the State should be that of a catalyst. It should not become an octopus that seeks to control everything. This means not only a concentration of effort on the part of the State to fill essential gaps in the industrial structure and to establish social overheads such as education, roads etc, but also to promote a climate in which there will be full scope for the creative energies of the people on the widest scale. Our plans have failed so far mainly in this latter aspect. There has been too much dependence on Central Government direction and too little of local initiative and inspiration. Neither the progress of agriculture, which is so vital for the solution of the food problem, nor the diversification of industry which is essential for providing employment, will be possible unless the impulse for improvement and organisation comes from the bottom, from the village and district level".

When the draft of the third five-year plan was published in July, 1960, The Hindu wrote: "As an official document it is such a superb essay in persuasion that it will be almost impossible to find anything to criticise in it. It bears the impress of careful drafting and sets out the objectives and the efforts called for with clarity and vigour"

The Hindu said that "by emphasising that the third plan should be conceived in flexible terms depending on the magnitude of the external assistance available, the Planning Commission has sought to ensure that the errors and defects of the Second Plan shall not be repeated. Apart however from the targets and projects that are to be implemented in the Third plan, what is going to be crucial to the future of orderly economic development is the strength and character of the fiscal and administrative disciplines we are going to adopt in the implementation of the plan and the determination we show in controlling prices. We simply cannot afford a quinquennial rise in prices of 20 per cent with all its damaging effects on family budgets and on the real value of the savings invested in Government bonds and other loans. Unless the attitude that inflation and high prices are inevitable in a developing economy is abandoned and primary concern is bestowed on holding the price line the whole fabric of planning is in danger. A determination not to allow the general level of prices — at least of those commodities entering into the basic cost of living — to go up and to bring it down to the extent possible is as important as the fulfilment of any targets. What this calls for is clear enough; the highest level of ministerial and administrative integrity and efficiency so that public money is spent wisely. It means the formulation of investment policies and priorities in such a way that the maximum return in terms of goods and services is secured in the minimum period. It calls for the vigorous discouragement of any kind of expenditure of an unproductive nature, whether in the public or private sector. It means the abandonment of expenditure on grandiose buildings and imposing edifices which do not immediately contribute in the slightest degree to improved production. Above all, in the light of current developments what the nation needs most today is a concentration on constructive activity and disciplined devotion to work. Unless people in authority set an example the national mood is likely to be one of frustration, apathy or resentment in spite of the fact that progress is being made in many directions. The real failure of planning so far, despite the striking achievements in specific fields, is the failure of those in authority to inspire among the people the feeling that they are all engaged in raising a great but poor country to reasonable prosperity as rapidly as possible in an atmosphere of freedom and co-operation. All our planning will remain unmeaningful to the masses unless they can be fired with this faith".

At the end of 1960, the Congress was riven with dissensions and factions and the Congress Working Committee expressed grave concern over the divisive forces that were rearing their heads in the country. The Hindu said the Congress must bear its own share of responsibility for these developments. "It is true that before independence it sought to function as a truly national organisation and despite its best efforts the tragedy of partition could not be averted. But why have we failed since 1947 in building up an integrated nation and why is it that the old evils of communalism, casteism, provincialism and linguism have appeared in some measure? Many an honest and detached observer of the Indian political scene may feel that these so called 'old evils' are more

rampant today than they have ever been before. The Working Committee is inclined to ascribe the growth of these disintegrating forces to the encouragement afforded to them by the democratic system with its elections based on adult franchise. But the failure of the purely communal parties in the last general elections shows that caste, communal and linguistic groups have been as active within the Congress itself as among other parties ranged against it. The sectarian groupings which have split Congress legislative parties in Andhra, Mysore and elsewhere and which have often paralysed Congress Ministries commanding large majorities in the legislature suggest that the evils of separatism against which the Congress leadership periodically inveighs is by no means absent in the Congress fold itself. When the Congress Working Committee's resolution exhorts 'every Congressman to realise that this battle against communalism, provincialism, linguism and casteism is a continuing process which can never be relaxed without peril to the nation', it seems to forget that at least for a decade during which it has been in power, the Congress has been progressively yielding precisely to these forces. In the matter of reorganisation of states as well as in regard to the pace of the shift from the English to the regional languages and to Hindi in the administration and educational system the Congress decisions have been such as to sow the dragon's teeth which can only yield a harvest of bitterness and separatism. While little was done at the political and educational levels to project the idea of India as a nation the drift of many changes made since 1947 was to emphasise the separatist claims of states and communal and linguistic groups."

The Hindu referred to the principle of equality of treatment enshrined in the Constitution and mentioned by the Working Committee and said "If the Congress Governments had strictly adhered to these principles and worked earnestly for eliminating the hindrances to real equality of treatment for all citizens, they would have been able by now to build up a homogeneous nation. But by steadily succumbing to communal and parochial pressures, the Congress has largely created the situation in which it finds itself and the country today. Unfortunately, its answer to the challenge posed by the various disintegrating forces appears to be to come to terms with them. Instead of calling upon the people to develop a national outlook by assuring all citizens fair treatment, irrespective of language, religion or caste, the Working Committee calls upon Congressmen, even in the elections to the Congress bodies, to secure 'adequate minority representation' and adds that 'in elections to Parliament and state legislatures Congress should put up candidates so as to give proper representation to minority communities'. As the indices of minority status are left delightfully vague this leaves the door open to the creation and perpetuation of new vested interests in the country putting forward claims for special consideration on the ground of representing minority interests. It is not by constantly seeking to satisfy such claims and making a special pleading for subordinating even the principle of merit — in regard either to recruitment to the public service or the provision of educational and other facilities — that we can build up a truly integrated nation. No minority can be smaller than one and national policies must be aimed at ensuring fair treatment for every citizen. Special safeguards for groups of citizens must be defensible in terms of demonstrable special disabilities. If policies are framed on the basis of such general criteria and not out of preoccupation with the political

problem of satisfying certain communal or vociferous groups, we may be able to create a genuine national outlook. The Congress can redeem its reputation for undiluted nationalism only if it will sedulously refuse to sacrifice principle for political expediency."

**A**MONG THE MANY contentious issues which plagued post-independent India and caused enormous loss of life and destruction of public and private property, not to speak of the misery and suffering caused to thousands of people by their violent upheavals were linguistic provinces and the national language. While the question of linguistic provinces has been settled more or less satisfactorily after a great deal of violent and non-violent agitation, the language issue still remains with us

The formation of linguistic provinces was one of the important planks in the Congress programme and The Hindu had supported the proposal. In fact it made a special plea in the case of Andhra Pradesh saying the Andhras constituted geographically, culturally and linguistically a well-defined group and should be accorded separate status as a province. And when during the regime of the Congress Ministry under C. Rajagopalachari in 1937 the Andhras made their demand, The Hindu supported it and made it clear that the Madras Government had also supported the separation of Andhra from Madras Province. But the constitution of an Andhra Province came many years later after freedom was won and after a valuable life was lost and riots on a mass scale had taken place in the region.

When the first Linguistic Provinces Commission, appointed by Free India's Government, submitted its report in December, 1948 it caused great disappointment which was shared by The Hindu. The Commission had suggested the postponement of the formation of new provinces or re-formation of the existing ones "until the future of the Indian States has been more clearly determined and when Indian nationality is well established". The Hindu said: "Whatever the historical reasons or accidents which determined their birth, many of the existing provinces are unilingual for all practical purposes and in the case of a province like Bengal the powerful hold that this particular element of unity has always exercised on the imagination of the people cannot be exaggerated. Rightly or wrongly the Congress placed the formation of linguistic provinces in the forefront of its programme for many years. There is a dominant feeling in many areas and an overwhelming one in some in favour of giving every well-defined linguistic unit the right to govern itself in regard to its domestic affairs consistently with maintaining the larger unity of India unimpaired. This may be largely sentiment and if fully implemented there might

crop up some of those evils that the Commission fears. But if popular sentiment is predominantly in favour of such a settlement it cannot possibly be prevented in the long run and it might even be undesirable to make the attempt. But this experiment since it is likely to be attended with momentous and incalculable consequences is one that must be undertaken in a peaceful atmosphere after a dispassionate consideration of all the factors involved."

As the Government of India dragged their feet over the formation of linguistic provinces the demand for an Andhra Province became more vociferous than ever and culminated in the fast unto death undertaken by one of their leaders, Potti Sriramulu in December 1952. The Hindu pointed out that the Prime Minister, Nehru, had made it clear that the demand could not be conceded unless the claim to Madras city was given up. "As Mr. Nehru has justly said the terrible ordeal to which a good man has, in pursuance of his own convictions, submitted himself, cannot but move everybody who has regard for human values. But by the same token it is unfair to others, who are as honestly attached to their own convictions to expect them to give up their position because something is being done which they can only regard as moral coercion. Fasts have no place in the politics of a free country, we can only hope that Mr. Sriramulu will be persuaded to give up his fast even at this perilously late hour since there is no desire on the part of anybody to withhold the Andhra State if the Andhras will take it. The future of Madras City stands on a different footing. The Andhras by the test of numbers cannot hope to have a decisive voice in settling it however long that settlement may be delayed and whatever may be the nature of the ultimate settlement. If in these circumstances they will still insist on the Government of India, in deference to their wishes, committing themselves to a particular view which is actively repudiated by the large majority of the population of the city and will possibly not commend itself to a majority of the State population as a whole, they must realise that they are really pressing for an undemocratic solution. And if they still insist upon their particular solution for the city being accepted as an integral part of the decision to form an Andhra State, they will inevitably lay themselves open to the imputation of not being serious in asking for an Andhra State at once. One may legitimately think that in the best interests of the Andhras themselves it would be better to postpone — not give up, no one asks them to do that — the formation of a separate state for a few years so that the great developmental schemes for these areas which have been launched might be brought to early fruition with the resources of the undivided state. But if the Andhras prefer to separate here and now, nobody would wish to keep them against their will. We can understand the difficulty that those who have taken an extreme position may feel in retracing their steps. But it is precisely in such situations that men of goodwill bent on constructive purposes should get active".

These words were not heeded. Potti Sriramulu's life could not survive the severe ordeal. The Hindu deplored his death from the fast which he imposed on himself without any "overwhelming necessity" since the Andhra State "has long been conceded in principle". "There will be deep if unavailing regret", The Hindu said, "that those who were entitled to plead with him to desist were unable or unwilling to sway him from his tragic purpose".

Potti Sriramulu's death was the signal for the outbreak of mass violence in Andhra towns with heavy loss of life in police firings and loss of property,

public and private, in mob attacks on buildings and communications. But within two days of the tragic loss of Potti Sriramulu's life, Prime Minister Nehru announced in Parliament the government's decision to form an Andhra State on the basis of the report of the second Linguistic Commission. The Hindu wrote that the decision "is bound to have a healthy effect on the general situation. It is a tragedy that in the passing away of Mr. Sriramulu a valuable life should have been lost. But those who barely a week ago declared that the Government could set themselves right with the Andhras if only they would announce the establishment of an Andhra State without making any condition about a general agreement cannot consistently maintain now that such an announcement has come, that it has made no difference. There are those who seem to regret that the Government should have taken their decision in circumstances that might create the impression that they have truckled to the agitation. There may be others who construe the dropping of the original condition about agreement as being tantamount to a resolve to impose a settlement. But the vast majority of Andhras will not be inclined to quarrel with the Government for having done what they have long been asking and hoping for from exacerbated feelings of pique or exaggerated notions of prestige".

When the decision to form an Andhra State was followed by demands for more linguistic states, The Hindu advised caution. It said the Andhra question was treated as an exceptional case. "There is bound to be a certain amount of dislocation and of lowering of efficiency in bringing into existence a new administrative unit in the best of circumstances. This will have to be allowed for but it would be folly light-heartedly to carve half a dozen new states and hope for the best".

The Prime Minister, however, announced in May, 1953 that a new commission on linguistic states would be appointed within a year. The Hindu pointed out the announcement could not be easily reconciled with the stand the Government had hitherto consistently taken. It said that "expectations may be roused and passions worked up to such a pitch that even if the commission can produce a set of proposals which satisfies all these requirements they may fall short of the popular demand as to misfire politically".

The Hindu said: "The impression that the Government of India if pressed might not be averse to a general redrawing of the map on a linguistic basis may give a new urge to claims for separate statehood which are far more speculative and far less difficult to justify than those of the Andhras or Kannadigas".

When the Andhra State was born on October 1, 1953, The Hindu wrote: "There were and are bound to be differences of opinion about the advisability and practicability of any general attempt to redraw the map of India on a linguistic basis. But it has always been recognised that Andhra by reason of its long history and glorious culture, stood on a special footing. It has a large and industrious population, a territory closely knit by tradition and endowed with much potential wealth waiting to be tapped and, above all, an ardour for adventure and a faith in its own future as part of the larger whole that is India which was urgent and would not be denied. Now that the opportunity has come it will be the hope of all its friends and well wishers that Andhra may harmoniously fulfil itself and in doing so strengthen and exalt the great nation of which it forms an integral part".

When in September, 1956 Parliament finally adopted the Constitution (seventh) Amendment Bill redrawing the boundaries of the States to form linguistic units on the basis of the recommendations of a Commission appointed for the purpose, The Hindu said the sharp cleavages of opinion provoked by the final decisions "will not disappear in a trice. But it is the duty of every responsible section of opinion to accept and loyally work decisions that have been arrived at after exhaustive (and exhausting) discussion and in the democratic way. As the Prime Minister has again and again pointed out there is nothing final about any matter which is within the competence of the country's legislature. If in course of time serious flaws in the arrangements now accepted are revealed they can be remedied in the same democratic way. Everybody is agreed that the idea of unilingual states can be overworked. While the State pattern is still largely unilingual there have emerged also a few important bilingual states. That may itself in course of time help to bring out more clearly the relative merits of the two systems"

But the most important of the bilingual state, Bombay, did not last and not until Gujarat was separated from Bombay and the two states of Maharashtra and Gujarat were created was there peace and quiet in the region. Long afterwards in the 1970s there was to be another agitation for separation of Telengana from Andhra Pradesh characterised by mob violence but it did not succeed.

The Hindu was not opposed, from the very beginning, to Hindi as a national language but it pleaded that before it replaced English "the whole of India must be given a chance to familiarise itself with Hindi before bringing it for official use, where precision and clear understanding of meaning is essential. Before Hindi can take the place that English now occupies it must overcome certain serious defects which now make it unsuitable for use as a common medium. The first is the fact that it varies from province to province and that it has not been standardised to the point where it can be employed with certainty of exact understanding". The Hindu urged. "It is better to move slowly in so vital a matter and avoid the danger of hasty legislation on matters of culture which are generally decided not in terms of years but of centuries"

On September 14, 1949, the Delhi Correspondent reported. "After an exciting debate lasting three days the Constituent Assembly today passed Mr N Gopalaswami Ayyangar's article on the official language of the Indian Union with amendments agreed to earlier by the Assembly Congress Party. The article lays down that Hindi in the Devanagari script shall be the official language of the Union. English will however continue to be used for official purposes of the Union for a period of 15 years after which Parliament may by law provide for the use of English language for such purposes as may be specified therein. The form of numerals to be used for official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals". The Correspondent added "There was a genuine sigh of relief and supreme satisfaction among all sections of the House when it was announced that a compromise had been reached".

Commenting on the decision The Hindu reiterated its views on the subject and said Hindi had to be reformed and made simpler before it could rise to the status of a national language.



Earlier in August, The Hindu had published an article by a writer who called himself "Narayana", criticising the haste with which Hindi was sought to be made the National language. He wrote. "The advocates of Hindi claimed to speak on behalf of the provinces. They said they stood for Hindi only because it contained Sanskrit words which were understood in all provinces. They promised to get Nagari script radically reformed. They proclaimed that Hindi would shed grammatical, gender and other peculiarities which were not in harmony with the speech habits of other provinces. It was generally understood that Hindi, the future official language of India was basically Indian. To prevent confusion between provincial Hindi and central Hindi it was even said that the central language would be named Bharati. But now that the battle is almost won they have changed. They say it is unpatriotic to press for any linguistic survey. And they add the threat that if Hindi is not made *Rashtabhasha* at once their followers would become uncontrollable. The elementary passions would be roused. A sample has been shown. To force Hindi on the Assembly Congress Party a fairly young lady who is the leader of a religious sect went on fast. A prominent member of the All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan declared that if the lady was allowed to die the government would be overthrown. She broke her fast only after the party accepted her demand. Everybody in Delhi knew that the method was wrong. Free India should not allow religious leaders to fast for political ends. A single Christian *Padri*, Buddhist *Bikkhu* or Muslim *Fakir*, going on fast can arouse international and internal forces which may shake India. Along with the fast, Delhi also witnessed what was given out to be a convention of the representatives of Indian languages. These so called representatives were chosen by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. Had they any mandate to speak on behalf of the provinces? A just solution of the language problem is rendered difficult by the aggressiveness of bodies like the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. At the meetings of the Kannada Sahitya Sammelan delegates discuss their language and literature but meetings of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan are like the military movements of Hitler. The means determined the end. This is what Gandhiji has taught us. Let us give up violent methods. The country needs ceasefire on the language front".

Apparently nothing much happened on the language front until the report of the official Language Commission was published in August, 1957. The Hindu said the report was "vitiated by an excessive bias towards Hindi and an anxiety to hasten the replacement of English by Hindi as rapidly as possible. The Commission doubtless recognises that no rigid time schedules can be fixed for effecting the transition but its approach to the problem is primarily that of the Hindi enthusiasts who regard 1965 as the zero hour for the elimination of English from official use".

The Hindu said. "Those who have pleaded for the retention of English as the official language for many years beyond 1965 — some have urged the deletion of the date from the constitution so that the process of replacement of English may not be achieved through forced marches and external compulsions on non-Hindi speaking people — have done so primarily out of consciousness of the inadequacies of the Hindi language at present to fill all the roles performed by English and the inevitable time lag that is necessary in carrying out the change over a vast country. Nowhere in the Commission's report is there a recognition of the enormous costs involved in the implementation of the

programme it has outlined. The system which we have inherited today has grown over nearly two centuries and the use of English in various fields is the result of that progress. It is physically and financially impossible to reverse the process, even if it is desirable, in less than a generation. But it is a serious matter for the nation to consider how far we should change and whether we should not try to conserve those elements in our English inheritance which are of supreme value to us in our effort to develop our country and to raise our status and influence in the international field"

In another leader on the subject, *The Hindu* said "A really national policy should envisage the fullest possible cultivation of the mother tongue in the various states, the steady introduction of the study of Hindi in our schools, the retention of English as the official language of the Indian Union till all problems of the transition period are safely tackled, and the continued study of English even afterwards to enable us to play our part worthily on the world stage"

*The Hindu* again wrote on October 25, 1957: "Our Correspondence columns and the reports of meetings and demonstrations organised in this connection (against any hasty decision on the language issue) testify to the strength of the feeling that English must continue to be the official language of the Indian Union for a long time to come and that its replacement by Hindi when the country is not for the change-over would be considered an unwarranted imposition. We have published a number of letters from Correspondents who question the statement that English is the language of the oppressors. They protest against any attempt to identify it with the shortcomings of British rule and emphasise that the movement against that rule had its inspiration in English literature and history and was led by men who spoke and wrote it with a mastery which showed that they were using it not as an alien language but as their very own. If as Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and others have pointed out we could continue to use and profit from the railways, telegraphs and other products of British rule in India, we do not see any sense in any merely sentimental revolt against the use of English. Such a revolt would only add to our troubles. When all our effort must be concentrated on economic and scientific development we would only be wasting precious time not only in compelling young men and women to study Hindi but in raising Hindi itself to the level required to enable it to function as the medium of higher scientific and other thought. The plain truth is that right now and for some years to come Hindi cannot function as such a medium"

*The Hindu* said in December, 1957, it was up to the people to express themselves in no uncertain manner and see that Hindi was not imposed against the wishes of the people of South India. "The other state governments in the south have also a duty in this respect and it would be a most desirable development if they all joined together in one grand remonstrance and warned the Union Government against any hasty action. The necessary amendment to the Constitution is not a very difficult matter. After all the Constitution has been amended several times already with far less justification".

*The Hindu* referred to Nehru's surprise that the 'fear in South India that the whole mass of North India was bearing down on the south to force a language on them against their wishes' and said: "He will not feel so surprised if he remembers the insidious ways in which Hindi is being introduced into various day-to-day practices. What started with Hindi on railway stations' nameboards,

has now spread to postcards, and money order forms and the non-Hindi speaking people in India and elsewhere are being placed at a disadvantage although the Constitution has specifically enjoined that till 1965 English shall continue to be used for all the purposes for which it was being used before 1950. Every day and in every way the non-Hindi population is being made to feel that knowledge of Hindi is a passport to special privileges in the whole field of administration."

The Hindu said: "We must repeat that Hindi was designated as the official language by the narrowest of margins — not in the Constituent Assembly but at the meeting of the Congress members of the Assembly, who in reality had a dominant voice in its proceedings. Dr Ambedkar has gone on record as saying that Hindi was chosen 'by one vote' at a recount of votes at the party meeting".

The Chief Ministers of Madras, Andhra and Mysore meeting at Mahabalipuram, near Madras, in January, 1958, declared that the discontinuance of the use of English by 1965, the time limit set in the Constitution for the change over to Hindi, was impracticable and that the Chief Ministers of all the States affected should have "wider consultations" among themselves in order to reach a satisfactory solution of the problem. It was learnt that the Chief Ministers supported the Madras Government's view that Hindi could not be made the official language in 1965 and that until conditions became favourable for such a change English should continue alongside of Hindi as the official language.

The Hindu said this was not wholly a satisfactory position. The use of both English and Hindi would necessitate more work, it pointed out and might lead to friction caused by incorrect or inadequate translation from one language to another. "Where is the difficulty in continuing the *status quo* until such time as it is possible to switch over to Hindi", The Hindu asked. "Language is a vital part of the administrative, particularly legal and judicial, machinery and it would be folly to take liberties with it in official documents etc. merely to please the Hindi-speaking group of the population."

The Hindu said while the State Governments "may take proper and legitimate steps without any attempt at coercion to develop Hindi in due course, it would be the height of political unwisdom to impose it by fiat on non-Hindi people who form the majority of India's population and who are agreeable to a continuation of the present arrangements till an acceptable way is found to end the present controversy".

Jawaharlal Nehru criticised the protagonists of English in a speech in Trivandrum in April 1958, saying they put "English in the place of a rival to nationalism", adding that "a foreign language can never be placed on a national basis". The Hindu said: "We must with all respect, point out that "foreign" and "national" are relative terms and that India through immemorial periods of her history has always absorbed many beneficent things that foreigners brought to her. After all English has been with us for 150 years and to South India at any rate it seems less foreign than many languages of the north".

A Presidential Order issued in May, 1960 on the reports of the Official Language Commission and the Joint Parliamentary Committee which considered its recommendations made it clear that English as well as the international system of numerals would continue to be used for official purposes in

spite of the constitutional deadline (1965) The Hindu found it gratifying that the assurance of the Prime Minister in the Lok Sabha in 1959 that English would continue to be an Associate Language after 1965 till such time as the non-Hindi people desired had been described in the Presidential Order as "indicating broadly the approach of the Government to the Official language question".

But the problem continued to remain posing a threat to national unity and in 1965 erupted in anti-Hindi riots throughout Madras State and the resignation of two Ministers from Madras in the Union Cabinet. The Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, reiterated Nehru's pledge that English would remain as long as the non-Hindi speaking people considered it necessary

When the British quit India in August, 1947, two foreign pockets remained, Pondicherry, controlled by the French, and Goa ruled by the Portuguese. The Hindu had long drawn attention to the incongruity of these pockets remaining in the midst of a free India and denying to the Indians there the benefits of freedom. The French were not easily persuaded to hand over their possessions but when they found that the people in the French settlements and those whom they considered as their friends and pillars desired to merge with India they could not resist the tide and gave away although not without putting as many obstacles as possible. And when finally the *de facto* transfer of the settlement to India was agreed to in November, 1954 at Pondicherry, The Hindu said it marked the happy ending of a long period of foreign domination of a part of this country by a European colonial power. "For this peaceful and democratic consummation all the three parties to the transaction deserve credit—although in varying degrees. In tackling this difficult and delicate problem the Government of India had set their face against seeking a solution by force although justice was on their side. As the Prime Minister has reiterated in his message on this occasion, the settlement of this problem is a vindication of and justification for the policy we have pursued in the matter of our dispute with other nations. That policy is one of peace and perseverance. Though it may appear tardy in achieving results, it is always the most satisfactory and India will continue to adhere to it. It is true that the people of the French settlements (who are the second party to this transaction) have frequently and understandably chafed at what they thought was like ploughing the sands. But it is to their credit that they never let this feeling of frustration break their spirit of resistance to foreign rule. For seven long years they kept up the agitation for reunion with the mother country in the teeth of typically colonial repression by the French administration. In seven short months they managed to raise the tempo of nationalism to a pitch that finally convinced their rulers of the untenability of their position. To say this is not to take away from the value of the gesture of renunciation by the third party to the transaction, namely, the French Government headed by M. Mendes-France. Judging by the diehard policy pursued by the previous French regimes it cannot be doubted that the situation would have been allowed to become considerably worse before the inevitable end came. By courageously intervening in time, M. Mendes-France has not only prevented these distressing developments but succeeded in writing a bright page in French history. He has rescued his country from being charged by posterity with forswearing her great and guiding principles, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which have served as a beacon light to

all democracies of the world. By this voluntary act of shedding a colony, France has made a significant contribution to the modern trend towards the liberation of dependent people especially in Asia".

Goa was a much harder nut to crack and the nationalists there were persecuted and terrorised by the Portuguese rulers who scoffed at the demand for freedom. Their brutalities against peaceful citizens increased as the voice of liberty found expression in thousands of people in and outside Goa. The Government of India while not discouraging nationalist agitation against Portuguese rule did not intervene in the affairs of Goa in the face of the worst provocation and even The Hindu was forced to criticise this policy. At the height of Portuguese brutality against freedom fighters in June, 1955, The Hindu wrote: "Portuguese brutality in Goa is attaining orgiastic proportions. Sadistic cruelty is being practised on the volunteers who are entering the territory unarmed and in pursuance of the Liberation movement. Last weekend brought out the Portuguese police excesses at their worst. Of the 140 and more Indian Satyagrahis who entered Goan territory more than 100 were thrown back into Indian territory after severe beatings and had to receive treatment for wounds and broken bones. Reports speak of the devil dance performed by the Portuguese police and military personnel with their hob-nailed boots on the bodies of Satyagrahis who had fallen down unconscious as a result of the beating . . . The question is how long this agony would last. Frankly, it is not possible to be optimistic about the situation clearing suddenly as it did in the case of the French settlements in India. And yet there can be no turning back or relaxation in the tempo of the national movement. One would faintly hope that the "Big Powers" whom Portugal is claiming to support her colonialism in Asia would at least warn her against using inhuman methods of repressing peaceful agitation. Meanwhile, the obvious answer from the Indian public — apart from the official policy, a policy of non-intervention for the present — would be to demonstrate that the whole nation is behind the movement for the liberation of Goa. This is already clear from the fact that the volunteers for Goa are drawn from all parts of the country. It would be a fine gesture of solidarity if all political parties jointly associate themselves with the movement".

The integration of Goa into the Indian Union was however not achieved without the use of force and this happened in 1961 when Indian troops entered Goa and occupied the territory. The Portuguese surrendered without offering much resistance.

The Hindu had a dig at Congressmen who dressed shabbily and thought they were following in the footsteps of Gandhiji. In an editorial in November, 1950 in a lighter vein it quoted Nehru as telling a Delhi audience that there was no gainsaying that in manners and behaviour India lagged behind certain other countries of Europe and Asia. Some people concealed their shabbiness under the cloak of the simple life. "Presumably", The Hindu said, "there was no need to explain to the sharp-witted audience who the simple livers were. But the unkempt appearance affected by so many Congressmen cannot really be blamed on the idea of simplicity preached by Mahatma Gandhi. Though he did not wear much he was always neatly dressed. In the pre-Gandhian era, it was customary for men of position to put on gorgeous raiment even to the point of matching dhoties with black boots and suspenders. Now the pendulum

swings the other way and rags and patches are regarded as the sign of love for democracy. Actually in manners and clothes, good taste shuns extravagance of any kind. A well bred person is not conspicuous either by excess of ornament or dirt around the collar. In this country, however, we have a variety of costume which is to be found in the West and there is much argument about a standard dress for the Indian. In our opinion such uniformity is not necessary except in the army or other disciplinary organisations. But there should be no gross mixture of styles — neck tie does not look right with a dhotie nor should a shirt hang outside a European coat. As Mr. Nehru has remarked taste need not depend on income. A person can be simply dressed and well mannered without display of wealth or arrogance of conduct."

During this period *The Hindu* specialised in such light and humorous editorial flourishes and we give some more examples.

An over-enthusiastic Punjab magistrate in his anxiety to rid the state of the monkey menace issued an order that every application for renewal of gun licence should be accompanied by five monkey tails. *The Hindu* wrote, "Memories of the fox hunt which ends with the elaborate ceremonial of presenting the brush to the favoured lady at the kill, may have unconsciously influenced the Ambala District Magistrate's order. . . . But that appendage of our lowly cousin is not exactly a thing of beauty, so few will covet it for its own sake. Possibly the Ambala functionary shares Ravana's view that the life of the monkey is in its tail and an arboreal who has lost that efficient aid has as good as lost his life. But not all monkeys are of the same heroic mould as the great prototype whose measure the poor demon thought he had taken — how mistakenly. The degenerate descendants of Kishkinda may at a pinch be craven enough to save their lives even at the expense of their tails. At any rate gun licence holders if they are pious men may be tempted to hoodwink authority and save their conscience by docking the monkeys of their tails and allowing them to go scot free, to feed with a more hearty appetite than ever on the standing crops! Some years ago the enthusiastic director of a great science institute used to offer money rewards for snakes caught on the grounds. Soon he found himself paying out a sizable sum every day. If all the dead snakes shown to him had actually infested the neighbourhood, it would have been altogether uninhabitable. The explanation was simple. A dead snake is not particularly easy to identify; and the trustful Director not having taken the precaution of impounding the carcasses brought to him they turned up again and again as dead voters so often do at the polls. The modern practice of bribing people by rewards for anything and everything puts a premium on dishonesty. If monkeys are a nuisance to farmers it is best to leave the farmer to deal with them, giving them such help as they ask for, instead of raising a bally-hoo."

Here is another on "Ritual of chewing": "The chronic chewer is unmoved by objections on aesthetic or sanitary grounds. After all teeth of a pearl-like whiteness have not always been in favour. The beauties of an earlier day used to take infinite pains to give their teeth the sheen of ebony. And spitting being the only colour wash that many of our public buildings know, the gentry who render this service may expect to be rewarded rather than rebuked. . . . Like the tea ritual of Japan this national habit has achieved almost the status of a mystery. All our frustrated artistry goes into the preparation of pan and its

consumption solus or in company. We in the south do not like to buy it readymade, though the younger generation does not seem to be too particular. The veteran is known by the box shaped like a book — the only folio, may be, he ever opens — which is his inseparable companion and the affectionate care with which he performs all the operations from wiping the leaf on his not overclean dhoti to squirting the ripe red juice on the pavement. He may be so hard up as to have to borrow a single shrivelled leaf and moisten with water yesterday's dried chunam. But he is as happy in his enjoyment of it as any Moghul who ever used gold leaf and lime of pearl."

On a "Dirty Trick": "A new kind of confidence trick seems to be paying rich dividends in Madras City. Though the publicity given to the activities of the light fingered gentry might have been expected to put people on their guard, guilelessness or perhaps vanity seems to work powerfully on the side of the rogues. The technique is simple, a little too simple, in fact. While you are waiting for the bus or walking along a crowded thoroughfare somebody comes up and points to dirt on your clothes, generally on that part of the anatomy which you cannot inspect without an effort. The dirt may be there or it may not be. It may have been adroitly deposited by your new found friend whose solicitude infects you with a sensitiveness to your appearance which is normally dulled in those who are doomed to live and move in the circumambient dust of our cities. While you are taking off your shirt or washing away the crumbs of a too copious breakfast, your purse or fountain pen takes wing — and so does the good samaritan. And the extraction is done so smoothly that when having caught the elusive bus, you discover you haven't got the wherewithal to pay the fare and wail, you fall to wondering with another part of your mind whether the world would not be a wonderful place to live in if only dentists could be endowed with half that magical deftness. But here the ache begins after the operation and it is not eased by the recollection that you have been had. Moral: When a total stranger points an accusing finger at your immaculate shirt put up your hand with a trigger happy cowboy gesture to cover your breast pocket".

On Matrimonial advertisements: "Western readers of Indian newspapers have sometimes expressed surprise at the advertisements which appear under the classification "Matrimonial". While they understand the Press publicity given to 'matrimonial cases' which deal mostly with the private and personal affairs of married people, they feel that inviting offers of marriage to the accompaniment of glowing accounts of the accomplishments and financial status of the candidate savours too much of the "marriage market". This presumably is the reason why this type of announcement does not find room in western newspapers. But a news item from Britain seems to suggest that the dropping of this self-denying ordinance is indicated. The Mayor of Winchester recently received a letter from America in which the writer (of the letter) sought the Mayor's aid in finding a British wife. The American gave as his reason for his transatlantic quest the fact (or rather his opinion) that American women were "too spoilt" for his taste. But apparently he thought he should reinforce his faith in English girls as model home makers by mentioning his two automobiles, his private aeroplane, a beautiful home and 'fair' income. No less than 50 girls so the report says, promptly answered the letter. But alas! none was chosen. It turned out to be a hoax, for the person who was supposed to

have written the letter said he knew nothing about the letter. But the episode seems to point to the existence of a real gap in the advertisement columns of British and American newspapers. If a single letter to a Mayor could evoke such a wide response it clearly shows that there must be a considerable number of eligibles who are not averse to finding suitable partners through the medium of newspapers."

When *The Hindu* resumed publication of David Low's cartoons in 1949 after a gap of a year or two it paid an eloquent tribute to him saying that "absolute fearlessness has been the hallmark of Low's genius". "This modern David", it added, "vanquished many a goliath in the course of his illustrious career" *The Hindu* said Low "has added to the gaiety of nations and it has been estimated that over five million breakfast tables scattered about the world rock with mirth every morning when the daily newspaper is passed round. All this is to the good, for a cartoon by Low is a liberal education in itself. But it is no less true to say that only a well educated person, alert to contemporary developments and versed in historical lore can fully appreciate the subtleties and the nuances of his drawings".

And when Low became the centre of a hot controversy over his cartoon on the coronation of the British Queen in June, 1953 with the caption "The Morning After", *The Hindu* came to his defence. *The Manchester Guardian* which published the offending cartoon first received a number of angry letters from readers protesting against the irreverence of referring to the coronation celebrations as a "spree" and a costly one at that and of suggesting that the nation would have cause to regret it when the time for counting the cost arrived. *The Guardian* explained that no offence was intended and it was sorry if any of its readers felt their feelings to be outraged. It admitted that the timing of the cartoon was perhaps too close and perhaps a little too near the emotions of the coronation day for the "cold truth" to be pressed home. *The Hindu's* own comment was: "The inescapable facts of geography and distance have taken that particular sting out of its publication in *The Hindu* to-day. Perhaps, too, something more could be done along those lines if it were possible to drop the caption, "Morning After" with its invariable suggestion of a "night before" spent in unwise and unrestrained hilarity while under the influence of artificial stimulants. But who would think of coming between Low and his audience with a kindly veil! As the *Guardian* puts it, 'Low expresses his own independent views; we should not dream of censoring him unless he overstepped the bounds of libel and decency'. Neither should we".



■ IN JULY 1949, K. P. Viswanatha Aiyer, Senior Assistant Editor and administrative head of the Editorial Department retired after serving The Hindu for over 34 years with devotion and loyalty to a great institution which brought spontaneous tributes and admiration from all those who knew him and who served under him or with him. The Editor, Kasturi Srinivasan, in a farewell letter to him, noted with regret that he had been unable to persuade Viswanatha Aiyer to remain in his post for some more time since the latter felt that his health would not permit him to continue his arduous duties. "You have been of very great help to me for over 30 years", Kasturi Srinivasan wrote. "In your writings you have always been guided by a high sense of responsibility and a faithful adherence to the principles laid down by my father. Your contribution to the progress of The Hindu has been of great value and is worthy of record. Myself and my brother are grateful to you for the loyal and devoted service you have rendered to The Hindu".

Speaking at a farewell party given to Viswanatha Aiyer by the Editorial Staff, N. Raghunatha Aiyer, his colleague and friend, said he knew him for 30 years and he had always found him as when he first met him on the Triplicane sands, cheerful but not exuberant, going about his work steadily and without fuss. Such equability was a great asset for a newspaperman, who worked against time, Raghunatha Aiyer said. Viswanatha Aiyer had remarkably preserved his buoyancy and the proprietors would have liked him to continue in service for some time longer. But Viswanatha Aiyer on grounds of health had decided to retire. The decision came to all of them as a disappointment.

Viswanatha Aiyer in his reply recalled that it was in 1910 that he came to work as a reporter in a newspaper office. He had to do his education by stages as he had to earn and pay his way. When the opportunity of joining The Hindu came he had seized it gladly. In The Hindu he had prospered and had learnt his craft.

Viswanatha Aiyer came from Kalpathy in Palghat, became an orphan very early in life and was brought up by an aunt. He had a chequered education and as he himself said earned and paid for his education. He graduated from the Bishop Heber's College, Tiruchi. He had a fascination for journalism even while he was a student and was the Tiruchi Correspondent of New India. But he had to work for his livelihood and tried his hand in many jobs in Madras including a position for sometime in a news agency. He joined The Hindu in

1915 and although he was offered a better position in the Accountant-General's office he preferred to enter the service of The Hindu because of his love of journalism. He earned the confidence of A. Rangaswami Iyengar when he was Editor and soon rose to the top position. When he was put in charge as administrative head of the Editorial Department Kasturi Srinivasan gave him a free hand. He was a glutton for work. Alone among the Assistant Editors of The Hindu he sat before a typewriter and typed his editorials. He specialised in economics and public finance and the financial page was in his care for a long time. He was a great improviser and could produce an editorial at short notice and to the required length. He was a voracious reader and had a good library. He knew all the tricks of the trade and was an all purposes journalist who combined in himself leader writer, News Editor, sub-editor and the reporter. We have seen his coverage of the great Dandi March as The Hindu's special correspondent. In those days the various functions in the Editorial Hall were not strictly defined and it fell to Viswanatha Aiyer's lot to introduce some kind of order in a confusing situation. After retirement Viswanatha Aiyer settled in his village in Palghat but passed away after two years.

A much greater loss to The Hindu occurred in May, 1957 when its chief pillar and outstanding editorial writer, N. Raghunatha Aiyer retired after over 30 years' service. For over 20 years Raghunatha Aiyer was a byword in Indian journalism for his mastery of the pen, of constitutional law and his fearless advocacy of the cause of freedom. His written word travelled far beyond the confines of the country to extort admiration and respect for his sharp intellect and virile pen. He joined The Hindu as an Assistant Editor on October 1, 1926. His name had been recommended to Kasturi Srinivasan by V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. Kasturi Srinivasan was on the look out since 1925 for some capable person to fill up the place of S. Rangaswami who was seriously ill. Raghunatha Aiyer was then Editor of The Daily Express a morning contemporary in Madras. Here he was the monarch of all he surveyed and he had complete freedom to run the paper as he liked and he did not want to barter away this freedom by joining The Hindu and so he rejected the offer made through V. S. Ramaswami Sastri, then Senior Assistant Editor of The Hindu. The offer was repeated the next year and this time Raghunatha Aiyer found he could not refuse since the paper which he served was in great financial difficulties and the salary of the staff had not been paid for many months. The appointment order was signed by the Editor, S. Rangaswami (he passed away shortly afterwards). Soon after he assumed his new post, Raghunathan became the main leader writer. There was then no News Editor and the work was shared among Raghunathan, Ramaswami Sastri, Viswanatha Aiyer and R. R. Bashyam who looked after telegrams. Raghunathan concentrated on improving coverage of Mofussil news. Mofussil Correspondents then were mostly stringers and much work had to be done in the news desk to make their contributions readable and this was what Raghunathan did. His speciality was to write long leaders after digesting voluminous reports on constitutional and other issues in the space of a few hours. He had a prodigious memory and could quote and cite arguments from journals and books to buttress his case with an effortless ease and mastery which must always remain a marvel. One of his proud achievements was to edit the full text of the Simon Commission's report running to several hundred pages in a matter of a few hours on one night and produce a 85 page

supplement the next morning with a long editorial written by him. On another occasion when King George VI died he was called in posthaste from his bed, ran up the stairs and wrote out a column of tribute in half an hour. He wrote with a sharpened pencil in bold letters which for all their hugeness of size were mostly illegible all the same and only the practised eye of the lino operator (what he wrote went straight to the Press, it was not typed) could decipher them. He wrote less than a dozen sentences on a sheet of paper and the matter was set up and proof sent to him as fast as he wrote them. He was totally devoted to *The Hindu* and in the 30 years he served it he had no other interest in life except *The Hindu*. It was only when he was nearing retirement that he took an active part in building up the South Indian Journalists Federation, a non-trade union body, which was his child and which he helped to grow into an influential organisation of the profession. He isolated himself completely from the outside world and had not travelled abroad. Although he wrote about all the big leaders and personalities of India and the world he never came into contact with any of them, nor did he want to. "How could you write about them and discuss their policies without the personal touch and knowing their background", he was asked. It was not necessary, he said. He had formed his opinion about them from their public postures and statements and his memory was extraordinarily good. He never forgot anything. As an example, he said, in all his life he would have exchanged only 500 words with C. Rajagopalachari although he wrote so much about him in *The Hindu*. He was not a crusader in the sense in which S. Ranganathan was. His writing lacked the fire, flashes of wit, ridicule and sarcasm, the outpourings of an outraged patriot demanding instant satisfaction which marked whatever Ranganathan wrote. There was no passion, anger and that vibrant quality which roused the feelings of all those who read Ranganathan's editorials in what Raghunathan wrote. His strong point was argument and cold logic presented in a style which was majestic and powerful in its onslaught. He was a student of law (which he studied after he took an honours degree) and he had no difficulty in breaking through the most carefully built cases in constitutional law and legislation. Where a fine point in interpreting constitutional procedure or principle was involved he would not count the space (his leader might run to three or four columns) to carry conviction to the reader.

He was an orthodox Hindu fully believing in the tenets and rituals of his religion and in the wisdom of his ancestors and he was totally opposed to Gandhiji's campaigns to reform Hindu customs and practices and asked to be excused from writing on them. A classic example was when he refused to write on the temple-entry proclamation in Travancore and the Editor respected his sentiments.

He had a rough exterior and his colleagues and subordinates in the Editorial Department feared and respected him. He himself spoke of a prank played on him by some of the leader writers in 1952. The practice in *The Hindu* was that editorial writers would choose their own subject and write and the Chief Assistant Editor would see the editorials in proof and do whatever was necessary at that stage. It so happened that on one evening Raghunathan waited for the editorial proofs and they did not come. And when after some time he asked the Press about it he was told that no one had written anything for the day. Without making a fuss and quietly Raghunathan himself wrote the two

editorials required and went home. And this went on for a week, he said, when finally the joke was called off and the editorial writers started writing fast. It was then that N.R. (as he was known to the staff of *The Hindu*) asked the boss why he kept quiet about the editorial writers' strike. Kasturi Srinivasan in turn asked N.R. why he did not take any action against the offenders. "Well, that is your job, you are the Editor, not I", he coolly replied. There was a close understanding of heart and intellect between the boss and his chief lieutenant, so much so the occasion for differences of opinion and conflict were rare. They even shared the same views on music of which both were greatly fond. Kasturi Srinivasan had so much confidence in N.R. that he made it a rule that if N.R. was away from Madras, he himself should be in Madras and N.R. must be in Madras if Kasturi Srinivasan was away. It should never happen that both of them were absent at the same time.

During the crucial years of India's history before independence N.R. played a notable part in helping shape the policy of *The Hindu* and many ticklish issues of policy and strategy in the national struggle for freedom were solved through the solutions and suggestions offered by *The Hindu*. *The Hindu* while it believed in the leadership of Gandhiji did not subscribe to everything he said and did and an example was *The Hindu's* attitude to non-violence as preached by Gandhiji. Gandhiji in a graceful tribute to *The Hindu* said it always wrote what was proper. It was not only in scholarly and serious editorials that N.R. shone. He was equally brilliant in light, short humorous pieces which enlivened the editorial page on most days of the week. And when he wrote about saints and music composers and about Gandhiji himself, when he was in the jaws of death while on a fast and when he was assassinated, his eloquence, the sheer beauty of his prose and the flights of his racy style into a picturesque world of love and compassion and goodness were a feast to the eyes and a delight to the senses. Here is a piece he wrote on the passing away of Ramana Maharishi in April 1950:

"Millions of his countrymen who had never seen the sage in the flesh revered him as a *jivan mukta*. And many earnest and sensitive souls all over the world for whom he posed the eternal values will mourn the loss of a living link with the ancient wisdom of India. The saints establish their empire over the hearts of men not by what they do but by what they are. They are the incorrigible witnesses to the Truth which lies beyond all appearance. Their life is all of a piece and the harmony they achieve seems something miraculous to an age whose characteristic malady is the split personality. To the man who struggles in the fever and fret of the competitive living their graciousness comes like a cool mountain breeze. Even the secular rebel, who prides himself on the courage of his convictions in dealing with social institutions and intellectual system is too often a timorous conformist in the realm of the spirit, affirming or denying according to the fashions of the day or the climate of opinion in which he is brought up. It is the seers like Ramana Maharishi who swim the uncharted sea of the soul and plant their flag on *ultima thule* . . . . There are no limits to the saving power of a good man's thought. The age of the atom bomb will also go down into history as the age of the Mahatma and the Maharishi. If humanity is not to be submerged in the chaos of its own making it must give more heed to its sages and seers."

For a man of Raghunathan's literary eminence it was no wonder that The Hindu Literary Supplement which he created and nurtured for over 25 years achieved a national and international reputation and it had a circulation independent of The Hindu. The literary supplement had a chequered career and in later years it was incorporated in the weekend magazine issue of the paper and lost its independent character.

N.R. wanted to retire in 1948 when he reached the age of 55 but Kasturi Srinivasan would not let him go. "A memo from me will never go to N.R.", he was reported as saying. N.R. was however allowed to retire in 1957 when he pleaded that his health would not stand the strain further.

It was at about this time that another veteran, Chief Reporter G. K. Vasudeva Aiyer also retired after 40 years' service. He was the second known Chief Reporter of The Hindu, his predecessor and the first to be appointed to that post being R. Ganesa Aiyer. Ganesa Aiyer, as we have already seen, came to The Hindu almost coinciding with its take over by Kasturiranga Iyengar in 1905. We have no knowledge of any Chief Reporter on the staff of The Hindu prior to that date. Vasudeva Aiyer was the Madurai Correspondent of The Hindu for a long time before he was promoted to the head office and to the office of Chief Reporter. He acted as a trouble shooter for the Editor and had excellent contacts with the official world and high dignitaries of the ruling race and also with nationalist leaders. He served as the perfect eyes and ears of the Editor and was responsible for many important news stories which appeared in The Hindu many days before others got them. In those days news of appointment of judges, executive councillors and such like posts were considered as great scoops and Vasudeva Aiyer had many scoops to his credit. He had an imposing personality with his turban and closed coat and trousers and commanded great respect and authority in his profession and with those with whom he moved. He exercised iron discipline in his department which had a galaxy of able reporters and The Hindu reporting staff acquired name and fame throughout the country and abroad. Almost all the national leaders who visited Madras frequently knew most of the reporters by name and had their favourites among them, whom they would request the Editor to send with them to report their tour of South India. Nehru, for example, always wanted A. K. Venkatesa Aiyar, who was to be Chief Reporter later, to accompany him on his visits to the Southern towns. Venkatesa Aiyar and his colleagues excelled in verbatim reporting, however fast or however confusing and repetitive the speaker might be and when read in cold print the speeches sounded much better than when they were delivered. The Hindu specialised in reporting speeches of leaders like Gandhiji, Nehru, Patel and other Congress leaders verbatim and it was the kind of stuff which the readers lapped up with relish and gusto. Vasudeva Aiyer maintained the dignity, independence and status of the paper and what was virtually a code of ethics and conduct was evolved by him and followed by other papers in the city. His name was a synonym for accuracy and fairness in reporting and it became the right thing to say that what appeared in The Hindu could not be wrong or unfair to any one. He fully maintained the objectivity in reporting for which The Hindu had been noted from the beginning of its career and he gave equal space in his notebook to all shades of thought and opinion. It was the fashion for all those politicians and others who were denied publicity in the north Indian Press to come to

Madras and be sure to find ready ears to hear what they had to say. Vasudeva Aiyer organised legal reporting and made it one of the best and most valued features of *The Hindu*. All the important cases that figured in Madras, political, criminal and constitutional were reported in full and *The Hindu's* team of reporters was praised by judges and lawyers. It not seldom happened that reports in *The Hindu* were quoted as evidence in courts and judges attached great value to them.

In a farewell letter which Kasturi Srinivasan wrote to Vasudeva Aiyer he said: "I have to express my gratefulness to you for the loyal and devoted services you have rendered to *The Hindu* during the past 34 years. The high opinion my father had of you as an efficient and willing worker has been amply justified. Fortunately you have enjoyed excellent health in spite of the arduous duties you were called upon to discharge and you have been good enough to continue in spite of the fact that you were entitled to retire three years ago and I am sure you did so because you placed the needs of *The Hindu* higher than your personal inclination. I feel that the time has come when I should no longer put you to the strain of going through the grind."

*The Hindu* lost an able and influential correspondent when Leonard W. Matters, who represented it in London for more than 20 years passed away in November 1951. Matters was a prominent member of the British Labour Party and he was responsible for persuading Labour politicians and intellectuals to write in *The Hindu*, in its special supplements, annuals and illustrated weekly (which had a short career). He also made it possible for *The Hindu* to have a wider audience in Britain including Ministers and high officials who paid tribute to its way of functioning. *The Hindu* in a tribute to him said: "In the death of Leonard Matters *The Hindu* has lost a zealous representative who looked after its London Office for more than 20 years and his colleagues a valued collaborator and genial friend." *The Hindu* said his contacts with Labour leaders and politicians in Britain made his reports to *The Hindu* particularly valuable to the paper and its readers. He became well known to the Indian community in London and many students and Indian visitors to England will recall his kindness and his invariable good humour. During the war Mr. Matters continued to send his reports through the air raids. Cheerful and hearty, he was a good mixer and his wide experience and catholicity of outlook led him to strive constantly in his work to strengthen the forces that make for understanding between Britain and India".

A readership survey by *The Hindu* in 1955 revealed certain interesting facts. Well over half the entire total of readers were graduates and the readership was distributed fairly evenly among all communities and religions. Nearly 55 per cent of the readers belonged to the 35 year or less age group and almost 25 per cent constituted new and growing readership. Occupation-wise a large percentage of readers was drawn from those in Government service, industry and business and from professions such as lawyers and doctors. Almost the entire higher income group was covered in the readership while a sizable percentage from the lower income group was also included. On an average more than five people read a copy of *The Hindu* totalling an effective readership of 363,000 on the basis of a circulation of 70,000 copies. Fifteen per cent of the readership were women.

An event of great importance to the readers of The Hindu and to The Hindu itself took place on January 14, 1958. The Hindu on that day converted its front page into a news page and pushed the advertisements to page two. It was a landmark in its history for even in 1878 when it was born The Hindu had set apart page one for the advertisers and the most earth-shaking news had to find its place only inside. Most of The Hindu's contemporaries in India and abroad, including its next door neighbour, The Mail, had switched over to featuring news on page one but in the good company of the London Times, The Hindu refused to effect a change which would go against its tradition and which would displease many of its readers. But when The Times decided to swim with the current and cast off the advertisements on page one for the day's most important stories, The Hindu thought afresh. It sounded its readership through a ballot and was agreeably surprised when it found that a large majority of readers and advertisers liked to have news displayed on the front page. That decided it and Kasturi Srinivasan gave the green signal to go ahead with arrangements to bring about the change on Pongal day.

A month before the change a circular was issued to all advertisers and agents announcing the decision and the changes involved. Towards the end of December and during the first week of January a series of advertisements were published in The Hindu with the headings "A New look in the new year", "Front page news". A typical advertisement on January 5, 1958 read: "In accordance with the wishes of the majority of our readers and constituents, The Hindu will appear in a new format on and from January 14, 1958. The most important change will be in the front page where advertisements will give place to the main news of the day. There will also be other changes in the layout of certain pages. We hope these changes will meet the wishes and conveniences of our readers".

Readers were given a preview of the change in format in a dummy in miniature that was supplied to them with The Hindu of January 8. Eighty-five thousand copies of the miniature dummy with news on the front page were sent out. Along with the shifting of news to the front page there was a marked change in the masthead on page one: the old fashioned German lettering of the name "The Hindu" gave place to a simple but sprightly modern type. There were four double-column and three single-column headings, symmetrically distributed on the page. The page looked attractive though there was no radical departure from the restrained presentation for which The Hindu was noted.

On January 14, The Hindu wrote: "The Hindu appears to-day with a new face. The front page is devoted to news instead of to advertisements. This change, though really just a technical one, has not been made lightly but to satisfy some passing whim but after considerable deliberation and in deference to the wishes of an overwhelming majority of our readership. It has not been an easy change for us to make either because our former format featuring advertisements on the front page has not only stood the test of 80 important and highly competitive years but has made The Hindu a distinctive publication among the great newspapers of the world. But the reading habits of the public have been changing fast in the last two decades and a newspaper alert and sensitive to public opinion has to take note of what its readers desire and keep pace with the spirit of the times. We have moved into an age when events go rushing by in

such headlong fashion that a reader today has often no time even to pause "to open his paper" for the news but must get it the moment he picks his paper up. The sweeping trend for newspapers has therefore been to move the main news of the day to the front page and today we join their ranks. Thus The Hindu which throughout its long career has striven to give a lead to its readers on matters of moment, now takes a lead from its readers in the matter of its facial appearance. That is the significance of the change effected in our format this morning. We are aware that some of our readers would prefer our format of yesterday to continue. To them we respectfully submit that what has happened is merely a change in arrangement, in make-up a switch of the middle page to the front. The content of the paper remains the same and there will be no let up in the high standards of journalism the paper has tried to maintain through nearly a century of public service. This is an assurance we would particularly like to give to such of our readers as do not wish to see our format altered and we would ask them to give the new 'face' a fair trial. Perhaps when they get accustomed to it they too will begin to like it".

The front page with news soon became a fait accompli and popular and in a few years it was to undergo further surgery to make it look younger and brighter.

The Hindu had its first labour trouble in its 80 years early in August 1958 when a minority of its workers, consisting mostly of unskilled men, suddenly stopped away. These strikers who, The Hindu said, were acting under the leadership of the Congress organisation, were joined by outsiders belonging to other labour organisations and indulged in violence and intimidation of loyal employees. The Hindu decided to cease publication five days after the start of the trouble "purely out of consideration for the personal safety of the large body of workers who had continued and were willing to continue to work".

In a statement issued on August 5, the Editor detailed the circumstances and incidents that preceded this step. The Hindu said that a number of employees "who refused to toe the line of the striking workers and their sympathisers have suffered personal assaults and loss of property on public roads for no reason except that they attempted to exercise their right to go to work. This is not surprising considering the huge size and wild behaviour of the crowd that lined both sides of Mount Road right round the clock opposite the premises of The Hindu. The result was that in the heart of the State Capital and in the hub of the business centre a huge crowd was allowed to indulge in unruly behaviour right under the nose of the policemen on the spot. This state of affairs continued for hours after all work had been stopped in the office and the management had announced that the publication of the paper had been suspended".

The Hindu which resumed publication after a week (on August 12) after the strikers had apologised for what had happened wrote: "Joy at the renewal of our service to the public is tempered by feelings of sadness over the happenings of last week. We are sure we are reflecting a considerable section of public opinion in expressing a sense of disquiet over the future outlook for the progress of democracy itself if those happenings become a growing feature of labour-management relations and over the responsibility of a democratic government and political parties in allowing a feeling of insecurity and worse



to be engendered in a section of the citizens and workers by acts of intimidation and violence by another section". The Hindu traced the trouble to labour being exploited by political parties "to strengthen their positions in terms of mere numbers, thanks to adult franchise which makes it worthwhile to woo labour". The Hindu said "Bad in principle as this is, it is fraught with incalculable peril to the development of industrial harmony because of the temptation it offers to political parties to promise workers to get them benefits which they can never get either from the point of the quantum of their effort or from that of the economy of the industries concerned. This has in turn led labour organisations themselves to seek affiliations with and aid from whichever political parties would promise them most. It follows that labour organisations which enjoy the support of the parties which are in power in one or other of the states have come to believe that they can get special rights and immunities from authority even to the point of getting away with acts of violence. This has created an intolerable situation which can do no good either to the labour movement or to the general weal".

Kasturi Srinivasan was never to recover from the shock of the labour trouble in his own office and the violence and intimidation which were its consequences and the utter callousness of the Government in not offering protection to loyal and willing workers. It left a big wound in his heart which was to kill him within 10 months.

The Hindu during this period was also plagued by acute newsprint shortage which forced it along with other newspapers to reduce its size (it was mostly a ten-page paper) and effect other economies. The Hindu while agreeing on the need for effecting drastic cuts in the consumption of newsprint "which is daily becoming scarcer and dearer" believed that the necessary economies could and should have been left to be effected by each individual newspaper in a manner that would take into account its character and style on the one hand and its ability to cater for the requirements of its clientele on the other. "We refer not only to our habitual readers but also to long-standing advertisers who are after all the backbone of newspaper finance. We believe that if this had been done it would have ensured equity and fairness as between the newspapers and a feeling of satisfaction among the newspaper reading public. The successive government orders which have been issued recently on this subject leave no room for the little adjustments referred to above. They impose rigid and cramping restrictions on the size and price of newspapers".

The role of the Press in Independent India had again and again to be emphasised by The Hindu because it saw only too clearly even barely a year after freedom was achieved that the suspicion and distrust which clouded the relations between the alien government and the nationalist Press continued in a very perceptible manner under the Free India Government. The Hindu writing on March 11, 1948 described the changed role of the Press in Free India "Before August, 1947", it said, "the main preoccupation of the Press as of every other progressive element in the country was with the problem of how best to secure the early transfer of power to Indian hands. This was due to the clear realisation that without such power no really permanent or satisfactory progress was possible in those nation-building activities in respect of which there was an enormous leeway to be made. By the same token the Press in

India could with justice be broadly described as national, not partisan in the sense in which newspapers espousing one side or other in countries where well developed parties function may be so described. Possibly the more marked emergence of government by party may in time come to be reflected to some extent in corresponding developments in the sphere of journalism also. But it seems to us that an independent if not completely non-party Press will continue to be a feature of Indian life. There is a quality in the national temper which is against accepting wholesale the dictum that it is the duty of an opposition to oppose or conversely, that it is the duty of supporters to support through thick and thin. While in Parliament the rigours of the Party game may not be relaxed the Press may be expected to take a more detached as also a more responsible view of its obligations on the one hand to the government of the day, and on the other to the people as a whole, opposing official policy when it must, supporting it when it can and at all times bringing instructed opinion to bear from different angles on all important issues so that the people may decide with full knowledge".

The Hindu said "The administrative capital of the country has not been the centre of Indian nationalism. It was in the provinces, particularly in the three presidencies, that a vigorous political life grew and matured under the stimulus of an all-India patriotism. And it was therefore natural that a sturdy and powerful Press should have grown up in these provinces side by side with the developing political life of the country. To speak of the 'national Press' of India in the sense in which British people speak of 'national newspaper' is therefore rather misleading. There is no important newspaper in any part of the country which may not be appropriately described as "national" in outlook".

"The Working Journalist in this country", The Hindu said, "is far less fortunate than his fellows in the west and for decades journalism has held an inferior position to such favoured professions as law and medicine. Many of our great public figures began their careers as journalists but they later forsook what has so far been a depressed industry where few men make their fortunes. One of the reasons for the obscurity of the Press was that it was mainly in opposition to the government and led an insecure life under the threat of various press laws and penalties. Today the position has changed though not as sharply as the pressman would like. The opposition Press is now the nationalist press but the new governments often retain something of the old suspicion of the freedom of the journalist and therefore retain emergency laws which enable papers to be suspended or suppressed at a moment's notice. It is a matter of surprise that even Pandit Nehru speaking to journalists at Bombay should justify the freedom of the executive to muzzle the Press as necessitated by the disturbed condition of the times we live in. . . The official case seems to be that there are wolves as well as sheep among the newspapers and that all must impartially be muzzled. Now it is quite true there are papers who make it their business to inflame one group against another and that in time of stress such papers cannot be tolerated. Surely the correct procedure would be to take action under the existing criminal law. That is the democratic way for it is only when things are done openly that public opinion will support the action of the government. To treat newspapers and journalists like suspicious characters whose movements and utterances must be spied upon and censored is unworthy of any government which professes to be guided by

public will. To outlaw a section of the Press or a single newspaper on the vague ground of its irresponsibility is only to encourage greater irresponsibility. The government that is ready to transfer more responsibility to the Press and its representatives will succeed in making a powerful ally in carrying out the functions of a democratic government which is governed by persuasion not coercion."

Nehru created a greater controversy in October, 1959 when he made a full-throated attack on the Indian Press and especially questioned the bonafides of the Editors of Indian newspapers. In two speeches at Chandigarh and Bombay Nehru said it had been taken for granted that Editors of Indian newspapers could not be expected to realise or speak the truth when discussing certain aspects of state policy. He recalled Baldwin's famous remark about newspapers that they enjoyed power without responsibility and had pointed to the lack of great editorial personalities who could stand up to newspaper owners and to advertisers. Nehru resumed the attack on the Indian Press in a speech in Delhi in which he described it as both product and symbol of private enterprise and editors as its champions against state control and regulation.

The Hindu wrote "It is clear that the Prime Minister looks upon the Press more or less as a kind of permanent opposition. He has evidently been surprised by the range and volume of the criticisms made by newspapers of domestic policies initiated by his government and he has brought himself to think that these have been inspired by self-interest. This is pure delusion. It is a fact, that a sizable advertisement revenue does enable newspapers to function effectively without looking to any personal or secret sources for the necessary finance. The Press in our country is no exception to this almost universal rule but on this account to say that it submits itself to undue influence by the advertising interests is surely to close one's eyes to realities. For one thing the Government themselves are responsible for a large segment of this advertising, and how does Mr. Nehru square this with the outspoken comments on official policy which he has evidently taken to heart? For another, the advertisements come from varied sources, big business, small trade, individuals etc and if all that is attributed to private enterprise is true, we must have the spectacle of our newspapers saying differing and often the most contrary things at different times as pressure from this advertiser or that waxes and wanes. There are also certain considerations that the Prime Minister might have remembered while calling the Press to account such as the power the state has deemed fit to take to restrict the supply of newsprint, to control imports of machinery, to regulate the volume and rates of official advertising, to fix wages and salaries and working conditions in newspaper offices. These are calculated to make it extremely difficult for newspapers to be as free from extraneous influence as the Prime Minister would presumably want them to be. If there is any single strong inducement for newspapers to adopt a particular line on any matter it comes from the Government. If in spite of this a number of newspapers look with a critical eye on the formulation and implementation of various policies by the governments at the Centre and in the States, the reason must be found in the policies themselves and not in any extraneous considerations. Mr. Nehru seems to feel that Editors of newspapers must project their personalities into their papers. He must surely be

conversant with the practice in other countries where the Editor's name never appears in print. In India it does, but it is a hangover from foreign rule when officialdom thought that it would be easy thus to fasten responsibility on the men editing and writing in the newspapers and to go after them if something they wrote was not palatable to it. In most newspaper offices editorial policy is a product of several minds working in unison, springs from the newspaper's own traditions and background and reflects (and guides) public opinion. The advertiser seldom enters the picture as the Indian Press Commission has pointed out. The owner of the newspaper, except in infrequent instances, does not call for this or that policy on any important matter; this is again the finding of those who have made ad hoc enquiries. Mr. Nehru should free himself from the obsession that the Press because it is in the so called private sector of industry and because some "chains" of newspapers have come into existence is by the very nature of things incapable of taking an unbiased or rational view of Government's policies, particularly in the public sector. He must not forget that while a political party goes to the polls normally once in five years, the newspaper submits itself to public judgment once or even twice a day. If the public finds that a newspaper is systematically "slanting" news by colouring them or distorting them and imports prejudice or self-interest into its editorial comments it will quickly assert itself and that newspaper will go down before others. The fact that most responsible newspapers have not only sustained but also enlarged their circulations shows that the people are in the main satisfied with their work. The Prime Minister appears to exhort his listeners not to pay heed to newspaper comments. This kind of propaganda — and it is really nothing but propaganda — will defeat itself in the long run. Mr. Nehru is certainly as interested as anybody else in the strengthening and developing of democratic traditions in India. It is always good for the country that its people should listen to various views on any subject so that they can know all the consequences of such action as the state may contemplate or take. It is this interplay of opinion that is really the bedrock of a really democratic government. Even during the crisis of the second World War Winston Churchill was careful to listen to the voice of his critics; in sober fact, some sort of 'opposition' had to be set up in the House of Commons so that its members could challenge on any issue his Government which reflected the unanimous will of the English people. Any attempt to ignore or deride the voice of criticism will deprive us of the one great safety valve of democracy.

"Apart from this it is unfortunate that the Prime Minister should have started a campaign against what is universally regarded as an important agency in the growth of democracy of the western parliamentary type which we have chosen as our model. It is now accepted that our plans depend not a little for their implementation on our ability to attract technical and financial aid by way of loans and investments, principally from the Western Democracies. These countries are wedded to an economy in which private enterprise plays a significant part in promoting the prosperity of the people. Wholesale and frequent denunciation of the private sector in this country and worse still charging the Press as well with toeing the line of the so-called big industries are apt to create confusion and doubt in the public mind in those countries as to the future shape of the mixed economy to which our policy is committed".

Whatever Nehru thought of the Indian Press he seemed to have had great respect and admiration for *The Hindu* although in his autobiography he called

it a bourgeois paper. His reference to *The Hindu* in that book is worth quoting in full "Among the Indian-owned English newspapers, *The Hindu* of Madras is probably the best so far as get up and news service are concerned. It always reminds me of an old maiden lady, very prim and proper, who is shocked if a naughty word is used in her presence. It is eminently the paper of the bourgeois, comfortably settled in life. Not for it the shady side of existence, the rough and tumble and conflict of life. Several other newspapers of moderate views have also this 'old maiden lady' standard. They achieve it, but without the distinction of *The Hindu* and as a result they become astonishingly dull in every respect"

The reference to the "old maiden lady", it could be argued, was to indicate the emphasis on stability which characterised *The Hindu* and the statement was made after comparing the conditions of other Indian newspapers about which Nehru remarked: "Their financial resources are limited and there is little attempt on the part of owners to improve them. They carry on their day-to-day life with difficulty and the unhappy editorial staff has no easy time. Their get up is poor, their advertisements often of the most objectionable kind and their general attitude to life and politics sentimental and hysterical" By implication Nehru had said *The Hindu* was free from all this and enjoyed stability and success

Perhaps no paper in India both before Independence and after had given so much publicity and space to Jawaharlal Nehru as *The Hindu* did and Nehru valued the important position occupied by it as a national forum. No statement of his or any of his numerous articles appeared anywhere in India without their being published in *The Hindu* also. On some occasions he wrote exclusively for *The Hindu* as for instance when he returned to India after his first visit to Russia in 1927 and wrote a series of articles on his impressions in its columns. When he started his own paper, the *National Herald*, he sent his son-in-law, Firoz Gandhi, to Madras to undergo training in *The Hindu* in all its departments. He had great respect for the Editor, Kasturi Srinivasan, and invited him to join the Board of Directors of the *National Herald* but Srinivasan excused himself. For some time *The Hindu* shared news dispatches sent by its Correspondents in London and New York with the *National Herald* under an arrangement which was referred to by Kasturi Srinivasan in a letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi on February 11, 1958: "Dear Mrs. Gandhi", he wrote, "Please refer to my letter to you dated the 6th instant. I have issued instructions to my staff about the transmission of dispatches from our special Correspondents in New York and London. These dispatches will be put on the creed as soon as the line opens at noon. Please arrange to have them collected from our office on Old Mill Road, New Delhi and re-transmitted to Lucknow. It is understood that the *National Herald* will publish these messages under acknowledgement to *The Hindu* and that this arrangement will be reviewed at the end of six months"

*The Hindu* had sharply differed from Nehru's views and policies, and once had even opposed his re-election as Congress President. After freedom it had criticised the economic and social policies pursued by the Nehru Government but it had never concealed its great admiration and respect for Nehru as a patriot, leader, and statesman. When Nehru expressed a desire to give up the Prime Ministership at least for a brief period in October 1954, *The Hindu* wrote: "But that high office is his allotted task for which it will not be easy to find a

substitute. And when this truth is brought home to him in an unmistakable way by expressions of the unanimous feeling in the country, we are sure his keen sense of duty will leave him no option but to continue to shoulder the burden. And his strength of will should enable him to maintain that resilience of body and mind which seem to confer upon him an aura of perpetual youthfulness. In the contemporary world Prime Ministers are mostly drawn from the ranks of septuagenarians and even after they cross over into the eighth decade they are not considered too old if they should have the vitality of a Churchill. Judging by such standards, Mr. Nehru should be able to give many more years of service to his country in the unique role of national leadership which he has played with such distinction. He commands at once the confidence of his own people, regardless of party and the respect of the rest of the world in a measure which gives him the stature of a world statesman. The country has launched an ambitious programme of planning for welfare of which he is the prime inspirer and which requires for faithful implementation all the dynamism and goodwill that he alone can harness to the multifarious tasks that have but just been well begun. And however much contending power blocs abroad might gird at India's steady refusal to be drawn into the vortex of partisanship, it is a safe guess that no important power would, even for its own selfish reasons, wish him out of the saddle. Under his guidance India maintains a certain cool detachment in the midst of violent contentions and an unpretentious readiness to help compose differences. Even if she has not achieved any spectacular success, the consciousness of her presence in the background has undoubtedly helped to bring down the temperature at more than one crisis when it looked as if the cauldron was boiling over. With characteristic simplicity, Mr. Nehru openly refers to the question that has been very much in the minds of people, "After Nehru what?" He asks us to remember that no great nation 'depends upon an odd individual or two'. At any rate it should not, and it ought to be the business of the great political parties to see to it that a younger generation is groomed for leadership so that it may be ready to take up the burden in the fulness of time".

Nehru till the last had the greatest confidence and respect for *The Hindu's* integrity, its standard and record for accuracy and efficiency. During a debate on external affairs in the Lok Sabha in March, 1950, references were made to Press reports in India on the communal disturbances in East Pakistan. Nehru said of all the newspapers, *The Hindu* was the only paper which published facts in such a way as not to excite people's passions.

On another occasion in February, 1954, he said: "The *Hindu* of Madras is a paper which has maintained certain standards in Indian Journalism and is known for the accuracy of its reporting and journalistic fairplay".

# “The Boss is Dead, Long Live the Boss”

51

**A** TERRIBLE BLOW fell on The Hindu and on all those who loved it and considered it as part of themselves when on June 22, 1959, the mighty banyan tree that was Kasturi Srinivasan was cruelly struck down by death in the early, dark hours of that morning. As unbelieving, dazed night sub-editors and workers in the Press carried the news to the outside world through The Hindu which he had said was his second wife they cried amidst uncontrolled tears: “The boss is dead, Long live the boss”

Kasturi Srinivasan, who was 72, had not been well for some time, some said his illness began with the eruption of labour trouble in The Hindu and the subsequent unfortunate happenings which destroyed his peace of mind. A man who had enjoyed remarkable health for his age until then collapsed under the strain which the recent events imposed on him. He appeared to be in normal health early in 1959 but in April he complained of liver trouble and much against his wish was confined to bed. He continued to read The Hindu in bed and followed events in India and abroad with interest. He suffered a haemorrhage on the night of June 6 and on June 21 his illness took a turn for the worse and the end came in the early hours of June 22.

It was the end of an era, a period of great consolidation and achievement. It was also the termination of a great life under whose shelter and protection so many lived and prospered, so many who looked upon him as a friend and saviour, so many who remembered a kind word, a kind deed by him and so many faceless millions who knew him as the man behind the great newspaper which was a household name. Kasturi Srinivasan was more than an Editor of a newspaper, he was a man of many facets who had many enduring qualities each one of which attracted the friendship and admiration of thousands of his countrymen. He combined in himself the journalist, patriot, the good samaritan, the lover of arts and fine things in life and a man who showed sympathy and concern for the common man. He was a man whom everybody liked and even his foes he considered as his good friends and thereby disarmed their offensive quality. There was world-wide regret at his passing away and tributes poured into The Hindu day after day, week after week and month after month. The Hindu continued to publish tributes for full four months, something unparalleled in Indian and perhaps international journalism. It was as if the

world had lost some one dear to mankind who had done so much for his country and countrymen.

The Hindu paid this tribute to its late Editor "Mr Kasturi Srinivasan whose passing away is so widely and deeply mourned to-day, has left his mark on many fields of public life in India. Not only did he champion the great cause of Indian freedom but throughout his life he upheld others of hardly less importance to the nation . Running like a connecting thread all through his life and many sided activities, as President Rajendra Prasad has pointed out, was his utter sincerity of purpose. Once he made up his mind about the credentials of any person or the worthiness of any undertaking, he did not hesitate to come out with the utmost possible encouragement. With this generosity was coupled a sense of fairness and consideration for others, even though divided from them on the political or other issues that came up for decision so often during his life-time. Indeed this fairness to friends and foes alike and a serene dignity and restraint that he exhibited at moments of crisis were the great qualities that he displayed as Editor of The Hindu. These were precisely the results of his training under his father, that great Editor, who built up those traditions of impartiality and objectivity for ever associated with this paper. But it is no exaggeration to say that The Hindu remained his first and last love. He identified his life completely with the paper's and, like his father again, dedicated himself to its service. During his wise and far seeing stewardship, The Hindu has expanded in many directions and now enjoys the distinction of being one of the best informed and best organised of modern newspapers. Mr. Srinivasan was solely responsible for this phenomenal growth"

Responsibility was thrust on Srinivasan very early in life and he had to shoulder burdens and make decisions at an age which would be considered as too young and immature. He was born on August 7, 1887 in Coimbatore where his father, Kasturiranga Iyengar, was practising as a lawyer. When the family moved to Madras, Srinivasan was a shy lad who did not speak much. He had his school education in the Hindu High School, Triplicane, where V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was the headmaster. He graduated from the Presidency College, Madras. He was keenly interested in sports, his favourite games being cricket, hockey and football. The year when he got married was the year in which his father bought The Hindu (1905) and he was then 18 and his bride was aged nine. Srinivasan wanted to go in for medicine but his father felt he should take up law which would be useful for a journalistic career later. But Srinivasan was not a success as a law student and his father took him on the staff of The Hindu after one year of law. When Kasturiranga Iyengar left for Europe to visit the war fronts as a guest of the Government of India, Srinivasan was placed in complete charge of the paper. Earlier he had declared himself as the Printer and Publisher of The Hindu. When Kasturiranga Iyengar returned he had the satisfaction of knowing that his son had managed things quite well during his absence. When his father passed away in 1923, the burden of carrying on the work fell on him and his brother Gopalan. His cousin S. Rangaswami took over as Editor but within three years following Rangaswami's death Srinivasan had to take over the Editorship as well in addition to his other duties. In 1928, however, another cousin, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, helped to ease his burden by becoming Editor. When Rangaswami Iyengar passed away in 1934,



Srinivasan assumed the office of Managing Editor, the first of its kind in India and akin to the Publisher of the American newspapers

Srinivasan's task was further to consolidate and expand *The Hindu* on the foundations so firmly laid by his father and this he proceeded to do by augmenting the news services, appointing staff correspondents in foreign capitals, and in Indian cities not covered so far, contracting for publication of articles by noted public men, politicians and journalists in English and American newspapers, and cartoons by famous artists and also importing the latest machinery for better printing and quicker transmission of news. His work in this field must be considered as phenomenal for *The Hindu* achieved the reputation of being the complete newspaper in India during his stewardship. His ambition was to model *The Hindu* after the *Manchester Guardian* and this he achieved so much so the *Guardian* itself paying a tribute to Srinivasan said. "Under his editorship *The Hindu* was one of the most respected newspapers in southern Asia. It follows a liberal editorial policy and is sometimes journalistically referred as the *Manchester Guardian of India*".

Unlike his father he was not closely associated with the Congress and he fashioned *The Hindu* as a non-party journal whose sympathies were with the Congress as the foremost national organisation fighting for freedom but which did not hesitate to criticise and disapprove of its policies when it felt they were not in the best interests of the country. He had a fine team of editorial writers who interpreted his ideas and views through the columns of his paper in a manner which carried weight and influence in the highest quarters. N. Raghunathan, senior Assistant Editor, said on one occasion that he regarded it as a great piece of good fortune that in their time the central direction of the paper had lain in the hands of one who was admirably fitted for his great task. Those who assisted him could say, "We have found ourselves completely in sympathy with the way in which he had directed the paper". Srinivasan started the practice of having an editorial conference every day shortly after noon. It was attended by the leader writers and the news editor. It became an occasion for frank exchange of views on topics and news of the day which might form the subject of editorials. Srinivasan, who presided, allowed full freedom for expression of opinion from all angles and it enabled the leader writers to find a consensus which was reflected in the editorial columns the next morning.

Srinivasan was proud of his employees and had more than once expressed his appreciation to them, saying that the excellence of *The Hindu* and its high standing was due to the co-operative and co-ordinated effort of all its employees. But he imposed a paternal and firm discipline on them. Of him it may be said what Neville Cardus said of C. P. Scott, Editor of *Manchester Guardian*: "The Hindu was his way of life; he expected everybody concerned with the paper as a worker or colleague, to give himself to it body and soul". An admirer of Srinivasan has remarked: "In a sense he was proud of them (employees) and felt responsible for them. His feelings towards them might not have been dissimilar to those of a feudal chief to his retainers. He looked after them conscientiously and made the service conditions in *The Hindu* among the most attractive in Indian journalism".

He was a father figure to his employees who respected and loved him. To them he was "Periavar", the Tamil word meaning elder or venerable person, and that was how he was known in and outside the office and very few called

him Mr Srinivasan. It was his practice whenever he left Madras on foreign tour to take leave of the workers in the Press first. They would garland him and wish him a safe and happy voyage and he in turn would tell them waving his hand in the direction of the Press, "All this is your property. I know you will take good care of it till I return." He knew the names of most of his employees and they had free access to him to make representations or request for help. Many were the acts of kindness shown to individual employees. He expressed his concern for their welfare and their personal difficulties or untoward circumstances touched him. He visited them in their homes or hospital if they fell ill. On happy occasions he made it a point to respond to their invitations. He used his influence to buy them cars cheap, he helped in buying and selling houses and lands for them. When the Chief Reporter went to a hill station which was the summer resort of the Madras Government and could not afford to get warm clothes for himself, he came to know of his plight and wrote to him "The allowance given is certainly not large enough to cover expenses of equipment for very chill weather. I shall very gladly help you to do so. Please do not feel any squeamishness on that matter and expose yourself to the risk of falling ill."

He told A. V. Subramania Aiyar, who had served as The Hindu Correspondent in Tirunelveli from the days of his father, Kasturiranga Iyengar: "I like you because there are very few Correspondents with character and integrity like you."

He noticed accidentally one day a young reporter fumbling over the telephone while talking to a high official. He called him to his room and rehearsed with him how to talk on the phone without being shy and without exhibiting an inferiority complex. The reporter recalling that incident said "He urged me to get over my inferiority complex and added that so long as I used polite language there was no need to be deterred by the personality to be contacted at the other end. Only I had to be precise and clear about what I wanted to say. This was a heartening experience and put me at ease ever afterwards in the use of the telephone."

Srinivasan could be severe where the reputation of the paper was concerned. When the Salem Correspondent of The Hindu missed the news of the death of Salem C. Vijayaraghavachariar on April 19, 1944 he sacked him on the spot and no amount of pleas and submissions could alter his decision. Equally firmly, he would stand by his Correspondent if he got into trouble with officialdom over some report or other published in The Hindu. He could not stand ingratitude and indiscipline even in those who were very close to him. One of his favourite Correspondents in a city in the north, whom he had nurtured and entrusted with great responsibility, defied an office order and left his post without sanction. The boss, as the Correspondent used to call him, dismissed him from service without hesitation, although with a heavy heart. Long years of service and confidence built up with devoted work were destroyed in one act of foolishness.

Srinivasan would excuse mistakes in performance of work but he would not tolerate untruth and dishonesty. The number of explanations given by sub-editors and other employees for lapses or negligence in work was an index of the degree of check and supervision he exercised on his staff. He was available on the telephone all the 24 hours and the night sub-editor was free to wake him up in any part of the night for consultation and advice. There was a sub-editor

in the Associated Press of India office in Madras who was very well known to him and who would wake him at odd hours in the night to convey some important news which had broken out. The Editor would ring up the night editor and instruct him how to deal with the particular news story. Probably the first person to have a look at the morning paper was the Editor himself. He was an early riser and by 6 a.m. he would have glanced through his own paper and its contemporaries, comparing them and noting what stories had been missed and which had been overplayed etc. He would ring up the News Editor and, as they say, without reference to the context, would want explanation for this and that and the poor News Editor not knowing what the boss was talking about since he would not have left the bed to read the paper at that early hour, would say something to satisfy him and heave a sigh of relief when the telephone receiver was placed back on the hook at the other end. The Editor then would put through a call to New Delhi to Shiva Rao or Rangaswami (who succeeded him) to find out the latest political developments and their background. Rangaswami said this morning call was a daily ritual and the main source of information for the Editor.

N. Raghunathan, his chief lieutenant, has remarked that Srinivasan did not do much to train new people for taking over positions of responsibility in his paper. He always liked to have familiar faces about him.

He was a conservative so far as featuring of stories and headlines was concerned. He would not allow a double column story for a long time and relented only after great persuasion and even then he would not permit the headings to be too glaring or sensational. He preferred what was called in the profession "label" headings because he had a passion for accuracy and objectivity. He frowned on any kind of slant in the introduction to a news story or in the heading. It was an ordeal for the sub-editor to write out a suitable heading in two lines (headings with more than two decks were not permitted) in a single column with Indian names especially being so long, for example, C. Rajagopalachari. Names were mentioned because he was particular every statement in the heading must be attributed to its source. Many sub-editors in such desperate circumstances found a way out by using the words "statement", "appeal", "Need" and "urged" which were called in their parlance "Harijan" headings. "Harijan" because the headings were "untouchables" meaning they could not be found fault with. And it once so happened that on one page there were three top headings side by side in which the words "Need for" occurred. Srinivasan circled them with a red pencil and wrote: "News Editor, the sub-editor who gave these headings seems to be in great need!" The sub-editor was in great difficulty with regard to headings also because the boss did not like contractions and it was impossible to give a decent heading in a single column without some contraction or other.

Srinivasan resisted the change-over of news to page one for as long as he could and agreed only when he found that the great majority of the readers wanted the change. He was the first to introduce the weather chart in a newspaper in India and he got the idea after a visit to the London Times' office. He was very particular that weather news should be featured prominently and completely and the choice of the page next to the telegrams page was his. Bay depressions, storms and rain anywhere in the south interested him and he followed their developments closely. He started an index department which

again was modelled after that in the London Times and it was so efficient and well organised that it acquired an all India reputation. He saw and read everything that appeared in his paper and the space fillers interested him quite as much as the bigger stories. The Hindu ran a Social and Personal column daily in which the arrivals and departures of the V I P s were recorded and he scrutinised it with scrupulous care to see that non-V I P s and publicity seekers did not crash into it. So much so getting into the Social and Personal column of The Hindu became a status symbol in high society. This column was abolished by Srinivasan's successors.

He was very strict about the deadline for the paper and woe unto the Night Editor and the Press Superintendent if the paper came out late. He was fond of circulating to the news desk and the Press the famous note of Northcliffe to his News Editor: "My dear young man, are you aware that your paper has been late repeatedly? Shakespeare himself could not increase the influence and circulation of a journal if the management deliberately prevented the public from getting it. Be shrewder, Chief."

Srinivasan handled his mail himself although he had an energetic Secretary in S. Narayanan who served him with great devotion for more than 25 years. The Secretary's job was to place all the letters intended for him on his table and Srinivasan himself would open them and read them. He would then dictate replies to the Secretary. He had great affection and consideration for his Secretary who was with him during his waking hours and was like his shadow. Narayanan recalled that one day he was hurt by something the boss said or did and after sending in his letter of resignation went home. A few hours later a note was delivered to him from Srinivasan in which was written: "The father summons his son to Sabarmathi" (Srinivasan's residence). "He had a big heart", Narayanan said. He was a stickler for propriety. Once he had expressed a wish to meet Kamaraj, who was then Chief Minister. Two days later Kamaraj drove to his house to the great surprise of Srinivasan who expostulated with him. "I had planned to call on you. I did not want a man of your position to call on me", he told him. Kamaraj smiled and waved away his protest. "I heard you wanted to see me and so I came. What is wrong with it?", he asked. Sir Purshothamdas Thakurdas told him at a reception in Bombay: "Your goodwill is worth several crores."

He avoided parties but if it became impossible to avoid them he ate at home and went. He was particular that the Ministers and officials in Delhi should know what The Hindu thought on the various current problems and had the leading articles transmitted to Delhi through the teleprinter every night to be passed on to high quarters in Government. Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy, had great regard for him and when Srinivasan met him in London after Mountbatten had returned home from India, the latter introduced to him Campbell Johnson who was his Press Attache in Delhi and who had written the book, "Mission with Mountbatten". Mountbatten advised Srinivasan to publish the book as a serial in The Hindu and Srinivasan readily agreed. That was how the readers of The Hindu got a first-hand account of the events before and after the transfer of power as revealed in the book.

Mountbatten's predecessor, Lord Wavell mentioned him as one of the earliest important Indians he met on assuming office. In a letter to Amery on November 8, 1943, Wavell said: "I have seen a few political visitors —

Sreenivasan, Editor of The Hindu, is the most important and I declined to be pumped by him. In a subsequent conversation with Jenkins (Private Secretary) he displayed bitter hostility to Jinnah and all his works"

The heyday of Srinivasan's power and prestige was seen in the years 1940 to 1944 when he assumed the mantle of Presidentship of the Newspaper Editors Conference and became the chief spokesman for the newspapers in its negotiations and confrontation with the alien government. It was a time of stress and strain, a time of uncertain future when the Damocles Sword was ever hanging over the heads of nationalist newspapers. Srinivasan was called upon to lead his flock to safety and security but it was no easy task. Everyone seemed to have agreed that if ever there was any one who could handle the explosive situation with tact and sagacity it was Kasturi Srinivasan Gandhi himself, who represented an extreme view, sent word to Srinivasan that he should agree to be President of the A.I.N.E.C. and a similar message reached him from Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy. How Srinivasan tactfully managed the situation and adroitly kept the peace between the Press and the Government we have reported in a previous chapter. But it was not all smooth sailing. Srinivasan faced much opposition from the extreme section to any compromise with the Government. But Srinivasan was not intimidated by opposition. He had a habit of allowing opposition speakers to have their full say and spend themselves out. This tactic unnerved them and in the end they veered round to his view.

An English writer in the Statesman wrote of him "How far his seeming laxity in presidential procedure results from his kindly nature, how far from a tactical sagacity puzzles some. Mr. Srinivasan exhibits an uncanny knack of exhausting his enemies by allowing them their full say".

During the Prof. Bhansali episode (to which reference has been made in an earlier chapter) newspaper editors met in Madras. J. N. Sahní and Devadas Gandhi, influential members of the A.I.N.E.C., were very angry about the Government's order and tried to persuade Srinivasan that the newspapers should be closed for a day in protest against the Government's curbs on the press and that they should refuse to print Government circulars for some time. Srinivasan did not want to take this extreme step but did not stand in their way. He hoped to utilise their extreme position to reason with the Government of the grave situation that would result if they persisted in their attitude. Thereby he brought about a compromise. The situation, however, eased since Prof. Bhansali broke his fast and the confrontation with the Government did not come off. Sahní many years later told an interviewer that Srinivasan was a man of patience who understood human nature. His ability to react to human relationship made him a successful negotiator. He had a sense of balance, a sense of objectivity. He never adopted extreme positions. He always tried to understand the other man's viewpoint and that was the secret of his success. He could easily classify individuals and size up the human element of any problem. He did not mind differences but he was irritated by an affront to his person. He handled the most difficult situations with the Government with success and he practically created the entire structure of the Press advisory system in India during the war. No one but he could have produced unanimous resolutions from a heterogeneous body like the A.I.N.E.C. His laughter was like that of a child, innocent and disarming. He did not use sordid language

nor sordid methods. Those who trusted him he trusted them. He stood by those who were loyal to him.

A measure of the affection and respect which he enjoyed among his fraternity was reflected in the tributes paid to him in January, 1944 when he laid down his office as President of A.I.N.E.C. Devadas Gandhi, Editor of *Hindustan Times*, and one of his critics, said "By his diligence and example, Mr. Srinivasan successfully brought about harmony and a sense of unity in the journalistic profession. The Press of India is grateful to Mr. Srinivasan for the invaluable services rendered by him to the journalistic profession in the country and for maintaining its dignity and rights in these difficult times."

Devadas Gandhi said that when Srinivasan took over the Presidentship of the A.I.N.E.C., it was an occasion when he had to take up "virtually the managing editorship of the entire press in India." Never for a single moment, he said, had they occasion to regret the choice they had then made. There was every possibility at the time — it was in 1941 — of the Press as a body being completely wiped out of existence. Thanks to Mr. Srinivasan's protecting wings the Press had not only not been wiped out of existence but the whole conspiracy to do so had been shattered once for all. On the occasion he had referred to they had retired to bed in the night expecting that the next morning the newspapers were all going to be suppressed; Srinivasan was up and toiling all the time and the next morning instead of the news of the disaster that was expected he was in a position to convey to the Conference the happy news of a very favourable compromise.

Devadas Gandhi said that quite apart from his connection with the Press, Srinivasan was a "very great personality". He was "pre-eminently human". In that small frame of his he enclosed the personality of a giant. The same great personality was evident in every line of his well-chiselled face and Devadas Gandhi said he was impressed by the magic of that personality. Speaking for the "vast army of competent men, young and old, who worked under Mr. Srinivasan", he said, it was true to say, "Once an employee of Mr. Srinivasan always his employee." That was because the protection Mr. Srinivasan gave was not only in the matter of pay — and it was certainly very substantial pay — but in the way in which he treated his employees, the confidence which he placed in them and the way he dealt with each person's difficulties and tried to sympathise with him and remove the difficulties. Some of them knew that Srinivasan was described by a large circle of people both with awe and affection as the boss; he was in truth "a great boss."

Sir Francis Low, Editor of *The Times of India*, said Srinivasan had presided over a "heterogeneous collection of people but they had all one interest — and it was here that their success lay — to protect their own rights and interests against encroachments from whatever quarter such encroachments came. If one knew something of the differences that cropped up in a body of so many widely divergent interests one would have some idea of the skill and ability with which the retiring President handled, he would not say a refractory, but a pretty mulish team. It was difficult indeed to get them all to see alike, but despite divergences they did find unity — unity in diversity. That he considered one of the greatest tributes he could pay to Srinivasan. He never lost his sense of humour. His ready smile and the way in which he could laugh at trouble had many a time won over doubting Thomases.

Ramanath Goenka, Editor of the Indian Express, another critic of Srinivasan, said Srinivasan never bore ill-will. He could not hate or dislike anyone, it pained him to do so. He loved harmony and unity. To know him was to love him. He was human to the core and a gentleman first to last. One might accuse him of being right or wrong but nobody could accuse him of taking sides with wrong, Goenka said.

Srinivasan was interested in knowing the background and the reaction to news. "Feed me with gossip" were his instructions to his Chief Reporter. However he gave no ear to idle hearsay that had no bearing on facts. He was fiercely independent and would not submit to any pressure from whichever side it came, the Government or the Congress. In 1930 Chief Reporter Vasudeva Aiyer in a letter to the Editor from Ootacamund, summer headquarters of the Madras Government, conveyed his fear that the Government might take some action against *The Hindu* for its pro-Congress attitude. Srinivasan was quick to reply to him: "You appear to have been oversolicitous and nervously apprehensive of any action that the authorities may contemplate taking against the Press. You will agree that that would not correctly represent the position of either the Editor (A. Rangaswami Iyengar) or myself and my brother as proprietors. I do not wish to appear to discourage or embarrass you in your work in any manner but as I have said I felt a word of caution was required and I dare say you will not take it amiss. It must be clear to everybody that neither patronising attitudes nor the threats of the vigorous use of the ordinance will avail to deflect us from pursuing what we consider to be the right conduct".

According to the biographer of Kasturi Srinivasan, *The Hindu's* campaign for council entry in 1934 "alarmed the authorities in Delhi and London. Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India, was afraid that the success of the paper's campaign would mean a return of the Congress to the legislatures and that this would upset his constitutional plans. He asked the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, to get into touch with Kasturi Srinivasan and try to wean him away from the Congress. Lord Willingdon sounded Srinivasan through a friend if he would meet him in Calcutta during Christmas but Srinivasan politely declined the honour. The British also tried to win over Kasturi Srinivasan and A. Rangaswami Iyengar through offer of knighthoods but their reaction was unambiguous. A. R. Iyengar writing on Srinivasan's and his own behalf said: 'Neither I nor my cousin is interested in a knighthood'".

Srinivasan, however, gratefully accepted the award of Padma Bhushan to him by the President of Free India in 1956 in recognition of his services as Editor of *The Hindu* and as President of the A.I.N.E.C.

During the 1942 movement when there were disturbances all over India, Srinivasan did not flinch from giving publicity to the movement and also to criticise the Government's war time measures. This earned for him the wrath of the Governor of Madras. Sir Arthur Hope, who wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow on October 11, 1942: "Although semi-Congress people pay lip service to the necessity of maintaining law and order, they nevertheless continue violent anti-British propaganda behind the scenes and I am quite certain that it is quite useless to expect any compromise with Congress or near Congress elements. For instance, *The Hindu* has had some scandalous articles lately and I have had it warned over a particularly bad one attacking General Irwin's broadcast speech. Srinivasan, the Editor, only got back last night from

Bombay and I have not heard his reactions, but if he does not improve we will have to take action despite his exalted position" To which Linlithgow's marginal comment was "That's the stuff"

Although Srinivasan did not align himself with Congress politics, despite his friendly relations with all leaders, he actively worked behind the scenes for promoting a settlement between the Congress and the Government and his most important aide in this task was his Delhi Correspondent, Shiva Rao, who kept up a continuous stream of private correspondence with his boss and arranged interviews for him with the Viceroy and other high dignitaries in the capital. C. Rajagopalachari used him as a medium to offer concrete solutions to ticklish problems during crucial periods in the freedom struggle. He had serious differences with Gandhiji over policy and methods and when Gandhiji suggested the nationalist Press should close down rather than accept the restrictions imposed by Government, Srinivasan while giving publicity to his views did not accept it. But he had the greatest respect and love for Gandhiji as a national leader and as a saint and when he was on a dangerous fast which nearly cost his life Srinivasan rushed to see him. The columns of *The Hindu*, editorial and news, show the special place given to Gandhiji by it.

Srinivasan was considerate to political opponents and rivals in the profession and did not bear them ill-will. He met one day the Editor of *Justice*, organ of the Justice (Non-Brahmin) Party which was in power under dyarchy and which had been carrying on a venomous campaign against *The Hindu*. He greeted him warmly and gave him a bit of advice: "I read your editorial in *Justice*. It was couched in rather violent language. You may differ from *The Hindu*, but please don't use harsh words, they do not do any real good to anyone". When he met the same man some time later he learnt that he was then without a job. Very soon he helped him to get an official post elsewhere.

In 1940 there was a fire outbreak in a newspaper office in Georgetown and the entire Press was gutted. When he heard the news, Srinivasan sent his Press Superintendent to the editor of the paper with an offer to print the paper at *The Hindu* press as long as it might be necessary. It was this offer which led to the *Indian Express* becoming a tenant at 100, Mount Road, from where *The Hindu* had shifted to a new building. In October, 1943 owing to unprecedented rain Madras was flooded and power supply broke down. Late in the night power was restored to *The Hindu* but not to the other papers. Srinivasan offered to print the papers of all those who were without power.

During the evacuation of Madras City in the face of a threatened Japanese attack in the summer of 1942 at the height of the Far East war, Srinivasan had a plan ready to shift all newspapers out of the city and pooling all their resources to equip one big Press located at Tirupattur, 100 miles from the city, in case the enemy's threat to the city really became serious. The fortunes of war however changed and the plan became unnecessary.

A notable achievement of Srinivasan was the creation of the Press Trust of India, a national news agency owned by Indian newspapers and his successful negotiations with Reuter's agency for partnership. Although the partnership with Reuters was dissolved later much against his wish his role in making it possible and the support given to him by the Government especially by Sardar Patel, Minister for Information, was worthy of record. He was elected Vice-President of the newly formed International Press Institute in 1951 and in 1957



he visited the U.S.A. with four other Indian Editors at the invitation of the American Committee of the I.P.I. He was for long associated with the Commonwealth Press Union and through this association came to be known to leading publishers and editors of the Commonwealth.

He shunned personal publicity and more so in his paper. He had issued orders to his staff that no picture of his should be published in the paper without his consent and the occasions when *The Hindu* did carry his picture were far and few. In a letter to Stanley Jepson, Editor of the *Illustrated Weekly of India* who had asked him for his picture in connection with the Diamond Jubilee of *The Hindu*, Srinivasan wrote "I have managed to keep my picture out of *The Hindu* Diamond Jubilee number but it seems I cannot escape you! I am asking my office to send you one".

On the same occasion a reader from Kumbakonam wrote to Srinivasan: "It is a pity that the Madras University has not yet seen its way to honour itself by conferring a doctorate degree on you, a worthy son of a worthy father and a patriot who has done constructive service to his fellow men both here and abroad. But that is only the yearning of an insignificant admirer".

Kasturi Srinivasan was a man of generous heart and instincts. He helped public causes and struggling Congressmen through liberal contributions. The number of Congressmen who have benefited from his purse must be legion. He had friends among all classes of people from the highest in the land to the common man in the street. And once his friend always his friend. N. S. Varadachari, a veteran freedom fighter, was sent by C. Rajagopalachari to ask Srinivasan for a donation for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. Srinivasan gave him a cheque for Rs. 5,000 and initiated the collection. When C.R. saw the cheque, he was surprised, he did not expect such a big amount. Srinivasan's affection for Varadachari was so great that when he did not find his name in the list of Ministers in C.R.'s first Cabinet in 1937 (the list was shown to Srinivasan before it was published) he protested to C.R. and Varadachari was appointed as a Parliamentary Secretary. Earlier in 1923, after Varadachari came out of jail during the Non-Co-operation movement Srinivasan sent for him and offered help. Later he gave him an appointment on the staff of *The Hindu* but Varadachari who was associated with the All India Spinners Association was asked by Gandhiji to stick to his job and he had to reject Srinivasan's offer. Varadachari recalled many years later that Srinivasan was visibly upset by his action. In 1933 when Varadachari became an insurance agent Srinivasan gave him his first life policy. Varadachari said with Srinivasan friendship was not on the surface but was deeprooted and steady. Unless the friend was a betrayer or grossly misrepresented him in important matters he never broke the friendship.

A journalist who knew him well and had experienced his kindness and generosity was the late A.G. Venkatachari, well-known writer and journalist. Srinivasan met him one day in the office while going up the stairs and stopped to talk to him. He learnt that Venkatachari wanted a book of his to be reviewed in the columns of *The Hindu*. Srinivasan himself took him to N. Raghunathan's room and told him: "Here is A.G.V. with a book which he wants to be reviewed. It seems to be a good book". In 1941 the Government of India decided to send an Editors' delegation to Malaya to visit the war front and Srinivasan in his capacity as President of the A.I.N.E.C. had to make the nominations.

A. G. Venkatachari was included in the delegation. But at the last minute when the ship to carry the delegation to Malaya had arrived in Madras, intimation was received from the Government of India that the nomination of Venkatachari was not approved. Srinivasan found out Venkatachari's address and, it being a Sunday, sent a messenger to him with a note asking him to meet him urgently. When Venkatachari came he told him of the objection raised by the Government of India and added he had wired to Delhi that if his nominees were not accepted he would call off the trip. The Government of India changed their mind and the delegation as chosen by Srinivasan was allowed to leave for Malaya.

When M. Bhaktavatsalam was the Education Minister of Madras he felt that The Hindu's comment on educational policy suffered from lack of proper understanding and he said so to the Chief Reporter who conveyed it to the Editor. Srinivasan invited Bhaktavatsalam to tea and introduced the Editorial writers to him. There was a frank exchange of views on the policy in question for over two hours and Bhaktavatsalam was able to clarify Government's policy and clear misunderstanding.

Srinivasan helped a large number of poor boys to complete their education by paying their school fees and supporting them in other ways. He was passionately fond of music and learnt to play the violin even as a boy from an eminent vidwan. He was one of the founders of the Music Academy, of which he continued to be the Vice-President till his death. When a book on South Indian musicians caught his fancy he showed his appreciation by offering to advertise the book in The Hindu free of cost. The impecunious author had 32 free insertions of the advertisement of his book and this helped him not only to sell his book but also gain a reputation in the music world. Srinivasan arranged private music concerts in his house and it became a matter of prestige for the top musicians to sing before him in his house. He did not have many recreations. He went to the races but did not bet. He liked playing cards and watching cricket and tennis tournaments. He played chess and was the patron of the Chess Association. T. A. Krishnamachari, the Chess Columnist of The Hindu, was his friend and he encouraged him to seek international recognition.

What D.V. Gundappa, the noted publicist of Mysore, who was a frequent contributor to the columns of The Hindu, said of Srinivasan would also be a fitting epitaph to him: "He was a good man, humane at heart, gentle in bearing and responsive to human values. I know of several lame dogs helped over the stile by his magnanimous hand. He was great as a man and great as an editor, great in goodness and great in sensitiveness to the values of life".

**K**ASTURI SRINIVASAN WAS succeeded as Managing Editor by G. Narasimhan, Kasturi Gopalan's son, who had been the General Manager of The Hindu since 1937. S. Parthasarathy, a cousin of Kasturi Srinivasan and senior Assistant Editor became the Editor. G. Kasturi, Kasturi Gopalan's second son was appointed Joint Editor and Srinivasan Parthasarathy, son of Kasturi Srinivasan, Publisher. G. Narasimhan, a product of the Presidency College, Madras, had wide knowledge of newspaper management and made a special study of newspapers on the continent and in Britain. G. Kasturi, who is an M.A. of the Madras University, also studied in the Presidency College, and entered the organisation in 1944. He was put through a vigorous training in all departments by his uncle.

S. Parthasarathy was Private Secretary to Kasturi Srinivasan for many years in addition to his duties as Assistant Editor and had accompanied him on his European tour. S. P., as he was known in The Hindu, was the first recognised News Editor of The Hindu and he was an expert in all departments of the paper, including sports. He was not a great reader of books or a scholar but he read newspapers line by line and his sharp intellect was backed by a retentive memory. His remarkable trait was his capacity to see all sides of a question. As an editorial writer he had distinguished himself by his advocacy of the people's cause in Travancore when the Dewan, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, was at war with the people's movement and later the Kashmir issue and generally Pakistan became his pet theme. During Editorial Conferences he would argue the Pakistani case cogently before demolishing it through skilful logic and facts. As a writer he was careful about his references and sources and his desk would be piled up with newspaper files and reference books. He had an elegant flowing style which could be devastating and floor the opponent. S. P. was senior Sub-Editor and News Editor for so long that the majority of the post-war editorial staff were trained by him. He moved so closely with them that they regarded him as a friend and took their personal problems to him. He was famous for his sharp wit but he was never malicious. He was a modest man, simple in his ways and in his dealings with others. At the Editorial Conferences he refused to occupy the Editor's chair, insisting that it be occupied by Kasturi Gopalan.

The columns of *The Hindu* during this period had acquired added attraction from the plethora of foreign news and articles in them. Notable among the foreign contributors was Walter Lippmann, the American Columnist, whose weekly articles were secured by *The Hindu* for exclusive publication in South India. News of America and American life and thinking were given to the readers of *The Hindu* for the first time more frequently and more intimately by a man sent from the Head Office. He was K. Balaraman, who entered *The Hindu* as an editorial apprentice and rose to be Chief Sub-Editor. He went to the United States for medical treatment in 1948 and stayed there as *The Hindu's* most distinguished and honoured foreign Correspondent for 13 long years. His dispatches were different from the common run of reporter's stories and they had a remarkable freshness and appeal that they won him many journalistic awards including that of the prestigious Foreign Correspondent's Award.

Balaraman had the honour of being in good company when he along with most U.S. newspapers and columnists backed the wrong horse in the American presidential election in 1948. Here is his dispatch about Truman's arrival in New York. "Electonitis from which America has been suffering reached its highest pitch yesterday (October 28) when Mr. Truman rode into New York, perhaps for the last time, as the reigning champion and according to old residents, received the biggest welcome ever accorded here to any celebrity. It seems that even the late Franklin Roosevelt did not get the 101 motor cycle escort or muster of two million people on the side-walks which Mr. Truman got yesterday. But New York has been historically Democratic and therefore yesterday's hullabaloo was no pointer to the election result. Mr. Dewey (Republican) is still the hottest favourite as he enters the paddock. As I listened to the President in the packed Madison Square Garden last night, I was unconsciously reminded of Comedian Will Rogers. Mr. Truman has the same manner, speaks the same simple, direct homespun style. He is still jaunty, and full of vigour which is surprising for a man of 64 who has just completed a strenuous tour of 31,000 miles, making 240 speeches. The election campaign here is different from what it is in India in that the candidates do not generally make weighty policy speeches but mostly indulge in invective and ridicule; the election rallies are big tamashas where people spend the time between applauding and drinking beer and eating corn."

This was how Balaraman described the scene when Truman won the Presidential election, confounding all the prophets, and took the oath of office in January, 1949: "When Harry Truman took the oath of office this morning (January 20) he could well have turned to his wife as Theodore Roosevelt is reported to have done back in 1905 and said 'My dear, I am no longer an accident'. For Truman has today become President of the United States in his own right. He is the third Vice-President to succeed to the Presidency by death; then be elected in his own right. . . I had the privilege to watch Truman's unique inauguration — unique if only for the reason it was the first time an ambassador from India was present — from the ringside. In matters of seating and other facilities, the Press has priority over all others — excepting of course the principal participants — at all functions in this country. Pressmen are rightly an honoured race here. Nowhere else have I seen the power and influence of the Press so fully recognised as in the States and in their turn Pressmen are completely aware of their responsibilities. At today's

function — be it remembered there were thousands of people willing to pay 100 dollars each for a seat near the inauguration platform — the Press enclosure was right at the foot of that platform within touching distance so to say of the President. And the ushers saw to it that erring sheep from other enclosures did not stray into this camp as generally happens in Madras where half the people in the Press enclosure probably don't have any right to be there. Next to the Press block was the enclosure for guests of Pressmen — whoever has heard of a Pressman in India being allowed to bring a guest? Then only came the enclosure for diplomats' wives and other invitees and persons who had paid for admission. What a contrast this to the position in our country where there is still a feeling that a Pressman is one who worries you for a free pass, whereas organisers of functions, political, athletic or otherwise, here are fully aware that they need the Pressman more than the Pressman needs them".

When Madame Chiang Kai-shek came to the United States in December, 1948, seeking aid to fight the battle against the communists she found she was no more welcome. Let Balaraman tell the story: "Madame Chiang Kai-shek with her begging bowl is a forlorn figure in Washington today. The State Department has made no attempt to conceal the fact that Madame Chiang Kai-shek is not quite welcome at present. Even if she had been wearing an overcoat of rhinoceros hide she could not have failed to feel the chilliness of the reception she got on her arrival at the Capital on Wednesday. The people still remember how she was lionised when she came to Washington barely six years ago when President Roosevelt himself and his wife turned up at the airport to receive her. The Congress gave her a rousing reception. But this time there was no President to greet her, not even a single high-ranking official. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's stock today has sunk below the second basement. Public opinion has hardened against his regime which is universally considered inept and incompetent".

At the conclusion of the United Nations session in May 1949, Balaraman sent this pen picture of the personalities and delegations which dominated the session:

"Soviet Bloc. The Soviet bloc seemed to work to a pattern. Gromyko (Soviet delegation leader) would make a statement broadly explaining the bloc's policy in regard to any particular matter and he would leave it to Dr. Katz-Suchy, the Polish delegate, to open a broadside on the opposition. Katz-Suchy was the laundryman of the Russian outfit for it was he who almost always washed the dirty linen of the anti-communists and the Latin American States kept his washing machine quite busy. Gromyko, of course, was ever the master. He stood head and shoulders above the rest of the delegates. Many people who have watched successive sessions of the U.N. have told me Gromyko is the most capable man they have met... Dark and handsome Gromyko is only 37 years old, an age generally considered too young for any responsible position in India. He has never been known to smile, a characteristic which has won for him the sobriquet of "Grim Grom". I, however, had the rare privilege of seeing him smile. It was immediately after he had concluded his great speech in the Political Committee on Spain, opposing the proposal to permit member nations to send Ambassadors and diplomats to Madrid — the finest piece of oratory I have heard on the U.N. platform so far and the Committee was rising for lunch. Mr. Del Vayo, former Republican Minister of

Spain and now the Foreign Editor of the *Nation*, walked upto him and shook him by the hand and congratulated him. Gromyko was very pleased. He smiled. But it was only for a fleeting second. He became grim again, spoke a few words and quickly left the hall. That was Gromyko all over. Unlike other delegates, he does not come to the delegates lounge. He arrives precisely on the hour scheduled for the meeting (of the Committee or party), goes straight to the chamber and takes his seat and the moment the sitting is over, gets up, walks quickly and without exchanging a word with any one boards his car and drives away.

'The three Malik's: Yakov Malik of Russia, Charles Malik of Lebanon and Ajit Singh Malik of India, each one of them as colourful a personality as any one can wish to be. I don't know if the name has anything to do with it but all three of them were big men, he-man type. Yakov Malik, called Maliksky in the delegates room for purposes of identification, is cut differently from the usual run of Soviet diplomats. Naturally, he is as thorough as Gromyko in his work and it is commonly acknowledged he is a master of procedure. But he is different in that he is genial and is more easily accessible. He is not a stranger to the delegates' lounge where he mixes freely with the delegates and Pressmen. One afternoon before the Security Council (on which he represents Russia) met, he spent a whole half-hour with me walking round the Lake Success building and talking of mice and men. He has a sense of humour and a sense of balance. He has never opened his mouth but made a solid contribution to the discussion in progress.

"Charles Malik, Chairman of the Lebanese delegation and also his country's envoy to U.S., is a rugged man, a Wallace Beery, with an aquiline nose. Chairman also of the General Assembly's Social Committee which hammered into shape (or misshape) the Commission on international transmission of news and the Right of Correction, Malik is very ambitious and is destined for a bigger role in U.N. But for sheer picturesqueness and popularity among fellow delegates, Sardar Malik is hard to beat. Tall and majestic with his coloured turban and greying but very virile beard, Malik was the T.V. cameraman's favourite. One evening our Malik created a minor sensation and very nearly stole the headlines — all unwittingly. It was the evening that the Assembly's plenary meeting at Flushing Meadows admitted Israel as its 59th member. After the vote had been taken and immediately the result was announced, the Sardar got up and left the hall because he had another appointment at Lake Success, 10 miles away. Soon after, the Arab Bloc delegates walked out of the chamber as a protest against the admission of Israel. Imagine our surprise when the news came over the teleprinter at Lake Success that the Arab Bloc headed by Sardar Malik had staged a walk-out. The Indian delegation were all a-flutter because the walk-out was not on the bill. Meanwhile Malik himself turned up debonairly and when pressmen besieged him for a statement on the walk-out, he did not know anything about it. And naturally, the P.R.O. of the Indian delegation got busy and managed to get the story 'killed' before it got into print."

Here is Balaraman's dispatch on the arrival of Jawaharlal Nehru in Washington in October, 1949, on his first visit as Prime Minister of free India: "The man whom all America had been looking forward to meet as the hope of the East actually set foot on American soil at last this evening. Pandit Nehru, Prime

Minister of India, in Gandhi cap and brown sherwani, looked like the proverbial million dollars as confidently and with assurance he landed out of the Presidential plane "Independence" which brought him from London and was greeted on alighting by President Truman. I was among the Pressmen who were privileged to witness this historic moment which everyone acknowledged was going to open a new chapter in Indo-American relations. Washington gave Mr. Nehru a reception worthy of an emperor. The first Premier of Independent India to visit America he received a booming salute of 19 guns and a resplendent guard representing all the armed services rendered him honour. It will be difficult for people living 10,000 miles away to imagine the thrill experienced by every Indian over the scene today when the U.S. Army's famous band struck up "Jana Gana Mana" (India's national anthem) and proceeded to play it immaculately. It was indeed a very proud moment to every one of us and I am not exaggerating when I say that I have never heard our national anthem rendered so beautifully as was done to-day. These Americans certainly know how to do things thoroughly".

Earlier in his dispatch Balaraman said Truman spent his week-end reading Nehru's "Discovery of India" and in his welcome speech quipped and hoped Nehru's visit would be in a sense a "discovery of America". Balaraman wrote: "As the friendly sun which had smiled throughout the day was setting, Pandit Nehru did one of those unconventional things characteristic of him. He slipped quietly out of Blair House and did some sight-seeing on his own which included visits to Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials. In the gathering darkness other sight-seers failed to recognise him and so he got away with it".

Balaraman fully covered Nehru's tour of America and Canada and The Hindu daily published long cables and more than one story from him. On one Sunday there were three stories with his by-line in the top on page one. Summing up the results of Nehru's visit to the U.S. Balaraman wrote in November, 1949: "The tour has been a thumping success judged from any angle and it will perhaps rank as the greatest personal triumph to-date in Mr. Nehru's career. It is true there have been many shining pages in Mr. Nehru's story before, but in the writing of it others have been concerned too directly or indirectly, whereas the outstanding success Pandit Nehru has achieved in what is popularly known here as his "voyage of discovery" of America is entirely of his own making. Pandit Nehru came to this country as the greatest living figure in the East, but in the 20 and odd days he had been here his stature had grown enormously and when he leaves for home on November 7, he will be leaving the American shores as one of the greatest men of the world and America has doffed its hat to him. The American is deeply impressed by the fact that unlike every other visiting statesman since war ended, Pandit Nehru alone has not begged for American aid. On the other hand he had even gone to the extent of giving the American complacency and the all mighty dollar arrogance a punch or two on the nose".

Balaraman returned to Head Office in 1961 as Deputy Editor and some years later was appointed Associate Editor. His place in Washington was taken by Easwar Sagar, who started as a Sub-Editor in The Hindu and then became a reporter.

In London, The Hindu had another able Correspondent, Dr. K. S. Shelvankar who succeeded Leonard W. Matters. Shelvankar had already done much

reporting for *The Hindu* from New York and saw the birth of the United Nations. A scholar and an author, Shelvankar's dispatches were marked by depth of knowledge and information. He had intimate contacts with top Indian leaders as well as with British politicians and thinkers and so was in a unique position of being able to interpret one country to another. He left *The Hindu* in 1969 to enter the Foreign Service of the Government of India. He was followed by H. Venkatasubbiah, who was Economic Correspondent stationed in Delhi. Later Venkatasubbiah returned to India and worked for some time in Madras as Deputy Editor. Batuk Gathani, one time Nairobi Correspondent of *The Hindu*, replaced him.

Between 1960 and 1971 India had to face internal conflicts, economic malaise and natural calamities and to defend itself against aggression once from China and three times from its other neighbour, Pakistan. *The Hindu* has told the story of these convulsions and upheavals with the country's ultimate survival over the years in all its grim detail, poignance and heroic endeavour. It has also recorded the terrible loss the nation suffered when its leader and Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who had piloted the ship of state in rough seas and in stormy weather for over 18 years, passed away in June 1964 leaving the choice of a successor to his partymen. The nation survived the test and chose another great leader in Lal Bahadur Shastri who led the country to victory in the war against Pakistan but who was snatched away by the cruel hand of death at the supreme moment of triumph in a foreign land. Again there was a crisis and *The Hindu* along with its thousands of readers was apprehensive of the consequences if an orderly and peaceful choice of a successor to Shastri was not made. It was a South Indian and a great Tamilian, K. Kamaraj, who rescued the nation from despair and confusion by making the election of the Prime Minister smooth and painless. *The Hindu* praised him and the new Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi.

The situation in the country in 1966 was far from happy and nature contributed its share by drought and famine. There was a spirit of defiance and indiscipline everywhere and violence showed its ugly head in many parts of the country with dire consequences to life and property. In the circumstances it was not a surprise that the Congress suffered reverses in many states and was severely mauled in the Centre in the elections in 1967 which saw many opposition parties in the saddle, especially in Madras where the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam came to power for the first time. *The Hindu* noted these developments with distress and the biggest blow of all was the great split in the Congress in 1969 and the final parting of the ways between Indira Gandhi and the Old Guard in the Congress. When Indira Gandhi plumed for a mid-term election in 1971 to make her position in Parliament secure nobody including *The Hindu* thought she and her followers would sweep the polls in the states (except Tamil Nadu) and in the Centre as they did.

But very soon a formidable danger arose following the influx of refugees in enormous numbers from disturbed East Pakistan. India which was undergoing immense suffering and distress from economic chaos and natural calamities found this additional burden was too much for her and appealed to the nations of the world for succour but the initiative was taken away from its hands when Pakistan launched a blitzkrieg against her. India not only beat back the invader but also helped in the birth of a new nation, Bangla Desh.



What did The Hindu think and say on these crucial issues and happenings? We shall give below some samples

When the border dispute between India and China assumed serious proportions in October, 1959 with China increasingly aggressive in action and militant in tone, The Hindu said the Chinese were questioning the "very fundamentals" of the agreement that had governed the relations between the two countries and added that the Chinese Prime Minister had chosen to challenge the validity or inviolability of the MacMohan Line "Our Prime Minister had again and again affirmed that the MacMohan Line constitutes our frontier with China, 'firm by treaty, firm by usage, firm by history and firm by geography' There can be no going back on this and Mr Nehru has said that India would resist any aggression into her territory Peking should now know the depth and intensity of the feeling that has been roused in this country by the mere publication of the White Paper . . . China must realise that the present frontier is the product of solemn international agreements reached in the past and that the mapping of the high mountain frontier has followed traditionally accepted procedures relating to the Himalayan watershed . . . China must choose between friendship with India and mere acquisition of territory of which she has enough and more already"

On October 20, 1962, the Chinese launched an invasion of India and overwhelmed the Indian posts in the north-east frontier The Hindu called it "naked aggression" and said "China has unleashed an undeclared war against us in pursuance of her expansionist aims" The paper said "A massive national effort will be required if the army is to obtain all its needs . . . The justice of our cause should be evident to all, no less to Russia and other Communist states than to the Western powers. We had done our best to avoid a war but we could offer to negotiate only on honourable terms and not when our soil is being increasingly occupied by the Chinese".

Krishna Menon, Defence Minister, resigned following the army's debacle in the war and The Hindu wrote. "Obviously, Mr Menon's removal from Government alone is not going to change the posture of our defence What is needed is thorough reorganisation of our strategy, planning and supply set-up and to provide our troops quickly with all the equipment they need for successfully finishing the task they have begun, the task of throwing back the invader".

Within two years of the Chinese aggression and India's humiliating defeat Nehru, broken hearted and disillusioned, was dead. The Hindu called him a "Child of the Indian Revolution which found its true and historic expression in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi . . . Leadership came naturally to him and he proved himself a man of the masses almost from the time he plunged into the non-co-operation movement . . . It is given to few leaders to achieve in their lifetime all that they set out to accomplish in their youth. Jawaharlal must be deemed exceptionally fortunate in this respect because he did achieve a great many things in a life of crowded activity and in the last few years as the wielder of immense power and influence over a nation of 450 millions. Whatever may be the verdict of posterity a 100 years hence on Jawaharlal's achievements and failures he has a secure place in history as a great national leader who used his high prestige and influence among the nations in the cause of world peace and international understanding His greatest achievement undoubtedly is the fact that despite the horrors of partition and the surge

of communal passions and linguistic loyalties he kept India united within a democratic secular frame-work and set her firmly on the road to economic development and modernisation"

Lal Bahadur Shastri was chosen to succeed Nehru as Prime Minister in June 1964. The Hindu praised K. Kamaraj who as Congress President tactfully managed the situation and avoided a contest. The Hindu said Kamaraj "has shown not only a remarkable capacity for judging the mood of the nation but also a marvellous ability to handle with tact and firmness a highly delicate situation. Credit is also due to all the top leaders who in this hour of crisis were ready to place their duty to the party and the country above their personal fortunes. If this sense of discipline, unity and dedication to national interests is preserved, we can face with confidence the many challenging tasks that confront us"

The Hindu advised that "in the absence of a single dominating leader who could combine many roles in himself and act simultaneously as a mass leader, the inspirer of the party's programme and the authentic spokesman for the nation in international councils, the Congress party has henceforth to develop a form of collective leadership which on the one hand represents the broad consensus of the party and on the other is able to reflect truly the national interests and preserve the national image. Lal Bahadur is eminently fitted to promote this collective leadership because of his self-effacing qualities and his humility and detachment"

Lal Bahadur Shastri had not been in office for long before he was faced with the biggest challenge to the security and freedom of the country. President Ayub Khan of Pakistan declared war on India in the latter half of 1965 and the new Prime Minister had no hesitation in ordering the armed forces to go on the offensive. The Hindu said, "The alacrity with which Ayub Khan has rushed to declare a state of war proves that the unleashing of the armed infiltrators was part of a well-prepared plan to seize Kashmir with the Pakistani army stepping in after the saboteurs had done their preliminary work. Has Ayub decided on a gambler's throw because this plan did not work out according to the original schedule? ... For us in India grave times are ahead. A truculent neighbour, encouraged by the arms it has received from the West and the arrogance born of new found friendship with other enemies of peace has thrown a challenge which must be accepted calmly and courageously. It is a terrible experience for a peace loving democratic people, engaged in the building up of their national economy and raising living standards to be called upon to divert their energies to military activity and to resist an unscrupulous and well-armed enemy"

When a cease-fire was enforced on September 23, 1965, The Hindu wrote: "The past seven weeks have been a great testing time for our nation, during which we had to make sacrifices in blood and armour, while the imperishable heroism of the civilian population in Kashmir and the Punjab and elsewhere has demonstrated the grim determination of the people to defend the country's integrity and hurl back the aggressor. The defence forces have covered themselves with glory. If there is one lesson Pakistan has to learn from its adventure of the past two months, it is that no military solution of the Kashmir problem will be possible".

The Hindu said: "The war has been badly reported abroad and, to this day, it is held in many countries that both India and Pakistan are guilty of an

unnecessary conflict. Even the details of the campaign have been distorted and foreign correspondents, especially the British, have played up Pakistani reports and blacked out our success. There can be no gainsaying the fact that at the cease-fire we stand deep in Pakistani territory, while Pakistan's plans to seize Kashmir, capture Amritsar and drive to Delhi have fizzled out. We have destroyed so large a part of the Pakistani war machine that it will be a long time before Rawalpindi can think of another assault on India. The Pakistanis' delusion that their forces were qualitatively superior to ours should be now completely exploded. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this war has been the determination and discipline of our armed forces who have confined themselves to severely limited objectives without trying to gain territory or seize inhabited cities. This also has been misrepresented abroad as a failure on our part but we may rest content with the attainment of our purpose which was to break the strength of the enemy and teach him that aggression does not pay."

The Russians brought about a meeting between the Indian Prime Minister and the Pakistan President at Tashkent and promoted a joint declaration by them on January 10, 1966, which provided for withdrawal of forces from each other's territory to the position before the war and an undertaking that disputes would be settled peacefully and not through war. The Hindu hailed the declaration and said it would be a "signal contribution to peace in our sub-continent". "It promises the start of a new era in the relations between the two countries", it said, "relations which had reached the very nadir ever since Pakistan launched its armed attack in Kashmir early last August. . . . Pakistan's sending in its armed infiltrators into Kashmir was what started the recent conflict and if Mr. Ayub Khan really means to honour what the joint declaration he has signed implies we have reason to hope there will be no more of this infiltration business. Unless this is ended once and for all there can be no peace in the region".

But Shastri did not live to return to India as a hero. He suddenly died in Tashkent from a heart attack and it was his body that his admiring countrymen saw on January 12 in New Delhi. Even as The Hindu proclaimed the signing of the Tashkent declaration in a banner headline which said: "India and Pakistan pledge to abjure force", it carried a built-in story in the main lead. "3 a.m. Flash. Shastri Dead. Heart attack early morning". And also another brief story that Gulzarilal Nanda had been sworn in as acting Prime Minister in Delhi.

The newsroom was empty when the flash appeared on the teleprinter as the sub-editors had gone home after putting the morning edition to bed. But the excited teleprinter operator (who later got a reward from the Editor) got the help of an examiner in the proof-reading department and together, after informing the Editor, they had the message set up and carried it in the city edition stopping the rotary which had already printed many thousands of copies.

The Hindu in a tribute to Shastri said by his long record of dedicated public service "Lal Bahadur Shastri has earned an enduring place in India's annals". "Time and again", The Hindu added, "he showed not only the qualities of tact and political shrewdness that are required in a democratic leader for success in dealing with difficult problems but also that regard for integrity and political morality which is a rare virtue. . . . It was rather unfortunate for Lal Bahadur

that almost from the time he took over, the country was plunged in one crisis after another, culminating in the tragic hostilities with Pakistan. Yet Lal Bahadur rose to the occasion every time and the firmness and courage with which he led the country during the trying period of the Indo-Pakistan conflict showed that he was a great national leader who could truly reflect the mood of the nation and defend its interests."

Referring to the task ahead, *The Hindu* said "It is the primary responsibility of the Congress leadership as the ruling party to ensure that the transition to a new government is made as smoothly and harmoniously as after the passing of Nehru. This would mean that now, as in 1964, the choice of a new leader should be based on the maximum consensus within the Congress Party."

Things however did not work out in the way *The Hindu* wanted. And when there were two candidates in the field for the Congress Party leadership, Indira Gandhi and Morarji Desai, *The Hindu* said that a contest "need not necessarily be abhorrent because it is of the essence of democracy that the party members are given a choice. But it is also of the essence of democracy that once the contest is over the loser shuts the din and noise of battle off and throws his support behind the winner in the search for answers to the multiplex problems facing the country."

Noting that an overwhelming majority of states' Chief Ministers had indicated their preference for Mrs. Gandhi, *The Hindu* said "What the nation needs in its present hour of greatest crisis is a leader who will command the general confidence of a very wide section of the people, a person who can heal the differences, allay suspicions and fears, hold together and inspire the country to meet the many challenges at home and abroad. Will Mrs. Gandhi be equal to the task? In a way she is somewhat of a dark horse because she has not so far had full opportunity to show her calibre. But as a close companion and confidant of her illustrious father she has watched at first hand the practice of the arts of government, diplomacy and statesmanship, which cannot but have helped to improve her perspectives. She is naturally handicapped by the lack of administrative experience but like leaders of many countries pitch-forked into the highest offices, she could overcome this handicap by forming a first class team of ministers having nothing but the national interest at heart. In supporting Mrs. Gandhi the State Chief Ministers seem to have also had in mind the general election due early next year and considered her the better equipped of the two candidates to lead the party to victory at the polls. This is no doubt an important consideration but it will not be the new Prime Minister's personality alone but performance during the year ahead that is going to count with the electorate".

When Indira Gandhi defeated Morarji Desai in the leadership contest a few days later, *The Hindu* said she owed her election as leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party and thus as the Prime Minister of India "undoubtedly a great deal to the fact that she is her father's daughter and is inevitably invested with the halo of Nehru. The nation's felicitations and prayerful good wishes will go to Mrs. Indira Gandhi as she enters the most difficult office to which anyone can be summoned. She doubtless has the advantage that she has the backing of the bulk of the Congress Party in Parliament and of the entire Congress organisation. But she can have no illusions about the gravity of the problems her government will confront in the coming months. In terms

of sheer physical and mental energy alone, the Prime Ministership will make very heavy demands on her and she would have to show mature judgment, tact, statesmanship and leadership if her government is to function smoothly, and efficiently as well as to win the support and respect of friendly governments abroad. Though some elements within the Congress and outside may seek to exploit her election as a victory of the left over the right, she has herself indicated that she belongs to the centre. This is just as well because only by following a pragmatic course both at home and abroad, can she expect to pull the country out of the doldrums in which it now finds itself. Nor can she afford to forget that the opposition in Parliament despite its disparate character and its meagre strength is likely to be quite critical and ever on the watch for any mistakes that may be committed by the Government which could be exploited for its purposes in next year's elections. It will be the hope of every one in India that she rises to the measure of her great opportunities and responsibilities and proves by her performance that she is worthy of the confidence that has been placed in her."

The Hindu was justified in its warnings and forebodings for conditions in India in the latter half of 1966 were not enviable. They were so bad that the President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, took the unusual step of warning the nation about the perils facing it in his Independence Day broadcast. The President referred to the widespread lawlessness and the "avalanche of strikes, demonstrations and agitations" and also to food shortages which got aggravated by hoarding and black marketing. The Hindu said "Lawlessness fomented and exploited by extreme elements for political ends has to be condemned in the strongest terms possible. The intelligent electorate which has attained maturity in its 19 years of free exercise of the vote and political thinking will of course know how to deal with those who seek their franchise even as they destroy democratic processes and institutions. But the ruling party will have shirked its responsibility if it lets avoidable situations of difficulty to develop by not taking adequate steps to gear up agricultural production, by not ensuring fair distribution of the available foodgrains, by not dealing firmly with the selfish and corrupt and by not cutting down wasteful and prestigious public spending that leads to inflation and all round hardship. The President has warned."

Writing on the eve of the General Elections in January, 1967, The Hindu said: "A canker is eating into the vitals of the Indian body politic—the canker of indiscipline. If it is allowed to grow it will destroy orderly life altogether and make an end of all that underlies the smooth functioning of democratic Government. In the Indian context silence does not mean only the assaults on the upholders of law and order or the burning of public property. Every attempt at substituting the technique of coercion to the processes of reasoning and peaceful persuasion has in it the seeds of violence. It does not matter how high minded or legitimate one's cause may be. It is the means that ultimately determine the ends as Gandhiji was never tired of insisting. There is nothing in common between those who believe in the processes of democracy and those who are willing to resort to any means to subvert the present order for achieving their avowed or undeclared revolutionary aims. It is vitally necessary that those who genuinely believe in the democratic system do not even in the

pursuit of legitimate objectives adopt methods of agitation by which they play into the hands of the enemies of peaceful progress”

In another election-eve leader, *The Hindu* said “The events of the last few months, the deepening economic crisis and the epidemic of lawlessness may have aroused doubts whether India’s 20-year-old democratic structure can bear the strains and stresses of a combined economic and political crisis and whether Indian leadership can rise equal to the grave challenges it confronts. The answer to these doubts and questions must be given by the leaders of the various political parties on the one side and the great mass of voters on the other. So far as the party leaders are concerned their primary duty in the present situation is to respect in spirit and letter the obligations they owe to the Constitution for maintaining the processes of democracy. But it is the attitude of the voters that is going to be decisive not only in determining whether we have a genuine and dynamic democracy or not, but also what kind of legislatures and Governments will come into existence after the elections and how they will affect the future of the country”

*The Hindu* put up a case for the voters to prefer the Congress as against the multifarious opposition parties. The voters, it said, would have to take into account “not only the known failures of the Congress but also its major achievements not the least of which are the maintenance of political stability in a country of such vast diversity and the imparting of a powerful impulse for many-sided economic development on a scale never attempted before. No one examining the programmes of the opposition parties, individually or collectively can have any assurance that any one of them could have managed the affairs of the country better than the Congress or avoided the mistakes attributed to it. It could not have escaped anyone’s notice that in spite of the passing of 15 years since the inception of the Republic no single opposition party has achieved a national stature anywhere approaching that of the Congress. . . Although some of the opposition parties, particularly the Jan Sangh, have tried to extend their influence and party organisation since 1962, there is no evidence to show that any of them has developed to a stage where it can offer itself as a national alternative to the Congress. It is this fact that has to weigh with the mass of voters apart from their judgment of the Congress record in office, in deciding whether the Congress should be given a fresh lease of power or not. The choice before the voters now, as in 1962, is between a single national party, and an assortment of opposition parties which have not much in common between them except the desire to dislodge the Congress. The voters cannot be unmindful of a situation in which a multiplicity of non-Congress parties — ranging from the Jan Sangh at one end to the left Communists at the other — are returned to Parliament and are unable to form a stable and homogeneous Government, capable of putting through an agreed, coherent programme. A weak coalition Government functioning with no unified policy would be infinitely worse than a Congress-dominated ministry which is restrained by an enlarged and lively opposition and an awakened public opinion which is less indulgent towards the lapses of the Government. Only by returning the Congress to power can we ensure the formation of a Government that is at once stable and responsive to public needs. And never has the country needed such a Government more than to-day when it is at a crucial stage both as regards national security and as regards economic development”.

The Hindu had also commented on the United Front of opposition parties formed in Madras with the sole object of ousting the Congress from power. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.) was the major partner in this alliance and The Hindu said "The nature of the alliance between the D.M.K. and the opposition parties seems to suggest that the latter seek to survive by sufferance under the D.M.K. than to make an appeal to the voters on their own distinct programmes. There is nothing, obviously, in common between the Swatantra Party, which stands for private enterprise and freedom from State controls on industry and business and the left Communists who advocate far reaching nationalisation and a rigid state controlled economy. The D.M.K. itself claims to stand for a more genuine scientific Socialism than the democratic Socialism of the Congress which the Kazhagam's manifesto has described as a phoney socialism favouring capitalists and landlords."

The Hindu received a number of letters from its readers — "vastly more than what could be published in our correspondence columns" — on its editorial "in which we had tried to set out the reasons why by and large, the voters should return the Congress to power. It is gratifying to us to note that a number of our readers agree with our argument. Equally it is a healthy sign that quite a few do not agree with us, though not all of them for the same reasons.

"We must, at the outset, make it clear that we are an independent non-party newspaper wedded to the national interest as we see it. We are not the mouthpiece of any party. We have been more often critical of the ruling party perhaps than singing its praises. We have always made a distinction between programmes and measures on the one side and personalities and parties on the other. Our criticisms have been primarily concerned with the unwisdom or inappropriateness of certain policies or decisions and whatever Governments may come to power after the elections we shall continue to judge them not by their professions but by their performance. In spite of our criticisms of various measures of the Congress Government — at the centre and in the states — in the past we hold that it is in the national interest today to give the Congress a further lease of office, it is not because we are oblivious of its lapses or mistakes. But in judging the record of a party like the Congress it will not do merely to concentrate on its failures. The public should judge the entire record and also take into account the tremendous odds which the Government has had to face since 1947 and more particularly since the Chinese attack in 1962. There are admittedly many mistakes on the economic front. But as against these must be set stupendous achievements".

The Hindu then listed the achievements on the industrial and agricultural fronts and said, "The accidental synchronisation of an economic crisis with the general election should not be utilised to judge the Congress record unfairly. Everyone should realise that this country will continue to face grave economic problems for a decade or two and there are no simple panaceas for them. The nation as a whole has to learn new disciplines and should not allow itself to be swept off its feet by glib promises of any party. Many of our problems will remain with us for many general elections to come. To imagine that by some political shifts or alignments we can wish away these problems in 1967 is to hug wordy illusions created by political opportunism. What then is the duty of the voters? Those who have already made their choices in favour of one party or other will do as their partisan preferences move them. But those

who have an open mind and who wish to exercise their franchise according to their informed judgment in the best interests of the people and the nation, should judge the Congress record as well as the opposition parties' promises with discrimination and come to their decision. They have to bear in mind that, in the present juncture, we need Governments which can command comfortable majorities in the legislatures and will not be haunted by uncertainties of precarious margins or the shifting supports of smaller groups in carrying out their policies. The electorate as a whole cannot be indifferent to the need for securing such stable governments because the present conditions in the country will obviously be worsened if unstable and uneasy coalition ministries composed of parties pulling in different directions get installed in office."

In the elections the Congress was administered a severe drubbing and in Madras it was almost wiped out. Analysing the results, *The Hindu* said "India's fourth general elections will go down in history as one of the most significant landmarks in the evolution of democracy in Asia and the world. Never has a ruling party, so well entrenched in office for two decades over so vast a country, been administered such compelling shocks by a resentful electorate. Whatever agonising reappraisal of its policies and performance the Congress may make in examining the reasons for its reverses it will have to realise that the electorate has shown in unmistakable form its dissatisfaction with Congress rule in many states and the centre. While the vote against the Congress is clear enough it is doubtful whether the picture is equally clear as to the alternative which the voters want. There is no swing to the right or the left over the country as a whole. While in Kerala the vote is obviously for the left parties, in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh it is the Swatantra and Jan Sangh that have been the principal gainers from the vote against the Congress. What the general elections have brought about is not a polarisation of parties but a new pattern in which there will be a fairly strong right wing and a slightly less strong left wing with the Congress remaining as the major party of the Centre. It is some consolation to the Congress that in an election in which it lost its majority in half a dozen large states including Madras, U.P., and Bihar, it has been able to secure a working majority at the Centre, but it will be facing a really formidable opposition for the first time in the past 15 years".

*The Hindu* said "The major factors that have contributed to the unpopularity of the Congress are high prices, shortages of food and other essential commodities, high taxation, corruption at various levels and the general feeling that Congressmen in leading positions were more concerned about feathering their own nests rather than attending to the needs of the masses".

When the D.M.K. formed a Ministry in Madras in 1967 *The Hindu* said it was a notable event in South Indian politics. "For a young party, which made its electoral debut in 1957, to be swept to power within a decade, defeating a well-established national party is no small achievement. . . . If the guiding hand of Rajaji and the unique leadership of Mr. Annadurai have enabled the D.M.K. to unseat the Congress, it will perhaps need the combined wisdom and leadership of both to ensure that the new Ministry fulfils the hopes raised among the electorate".

When Annadurai fell seriously ill early in 1969, *The Hindu* gave extensive coverage to the news making it its lead story on page one on many days. It



published hour to hour bulletins on his health and when the D. M. K. leader passed away in the early hours of February 3, 1969 it announced the sad news on page one in a banner heading with a three column "intro" to the story and a double column picture of Annadurai. It carried a pageful of pictures highlighting some of the important events in Annadurai's life. It also carried a number of pictures of the lying in state and the funeral which was reported in great detail.

In a tribute to Annadurai, *The Hindu* wrote "An orator, persuasive writer and astute politician fast maturing into statesman, he was above all a non-conformist. The meteoric rise of the D. M. K. which he headed from what appeared to be a communal mass movement to a potent political party that could ride to power in the state in the course of the first three general elections is surely a tribute to his leadership in the face of heavy odds. If ever a leader in this part of the country could be described as truly charismatic it was Mr. Annadurai whose speeches cast a spell on the thousands of his followers who flocked to hear him and worshiped him as their guide, philosopher and friend, long before there was even a remote possibility of his holding the reins of power. The greatest of Annadurai's assets perhaps was that classical Greek virtue of moderation which came into play often, invested his administrative decisions with an understanding of the other side of the case and helped pull into line extremist elements in the party. It is this moderation as much as his spell binding leadership that kept the D. M. K. a closely knit party even in the midst of transparent personal rivalries and with the lack of a clear cut economic programme".

The period between 1967 and 1969 when the great Congress split took place was one of confusion and chaos in Indian politics and public life. When Kingsley Martin of *New Statesman* advised the British Press to "mix in a little of the daily happiness and the struggle for peace and sanity which accompany the daily tragedies" of death and misfortune, *The Hindu* said "Now if Mr. Martin had addressed himself to us rather than to the British he would have sown his counsel in soil which circumstance had made more fertile to it. The good with us today, being scarce, is news. Law and order, discipline and decencies of public conduct are interred with the bones of our past. Today death and violence and misfortune are so common they are humdrum. They are on the streets all day; they are child's play; children play with them. If even so the burning of trains, closing of schools, crossing of legislative floors still claim the front page it is because there is little better to put in their place. 'The struggle for peace and sanity' which Mr. Martin talks about is just what editorial eyes in this country are constantly on the alert to catch in the contemporary scene but are unable to do so. Willingly we would mix them in stronger doses with the daily tragedies than Mr. Martin desires, — whenever they show up. His plea is not addressed to us but we lose nothing thereby. We are the converted".

R. K. Narayan wrote to *The Hindu* on the potency of the stone as an offensive weapon in the language disturbances of 1967 "The present strife one reads about each day" he said, "in any street of any town in South India seems to me not merely one of language or linguistics or phonetics or the superiority or inferiority of any brand of vocal sound but one of the profound questioning of the status of human speech itself, the entire basis of this faculty seems to be under severe examination, a research in which everyone is participating. A variety of men have undertaken this job and each has his own way of

expressing his conclusion; some do it through the Legislature, some through public statement or speeches and all the rest (who have no facilities for public speaking or enacting a law) by heaving a stone, and whatever may be the medium of expression the result is invariably shattering. Of the three the last method is far reaching. Thanks to our municipalities there is no dearth of stones at any given spot in a modern town, city or highway. If it is not out of a longstanding metal heap on the roadside, you can always detach one from under the road surface itself. In either case the language 'stir' clears a roadside obstruction or smooths out an incompetently done surface by eliminating all the loose stones concealed from view, what the P. W. D. ought to be doing under normal circumstances, but nowadays largely being left to be executed by the man in the street. One important fact has emerged from all the turmoil around us. Stone age and glass age cannot co-exist, although paradoxically enough, both seem to be flourishing and progressing at an equal pace. Everywhere our architects, automobile designers and street lighters are providing acres and acres of glass surface vertically, horizontally, and in every possible direction. Simultaneously, all our municipal bodies and the P. W. D. laboriously gather stones from far and near and leave them round in convenient heaps so that those who look for stones may lose no time in finding them. The stone has lost its geological innocuity. It has proved itself to be as deadly as a pistol pointed at your chest to drive home a point or a bargain. No doubt its action is not based on subtle or intricate scientific calculations but purely on the elementary Newton's laws, yet the stone is no less lethal and must soon be included in the Arms Act. In this particular disarmament programme, needless to say, we shall have to depend on the co-operation of our Public Work and municipal authorities."

The great split in the Congress leadership occurred in Bangalore in July, 1969 when the Party's Parliamentary Board adopted Sanjiva Reddi as the party's nominee for Presidentship overriding Mrs. Indira Gandhi's candidate. The Hindu wrote: "The split could be dismissed as just an internal problem of a political party were it not for two factors of vital significance for the whole country. First, the Congress Party is still the majority Party in the presidential elections and its nominee should, if nothing goes wrong with the voting, therefore become the next President. Secondly—and this is more important—the Congress Party is the ruling party at the federal level and a divided leadership would seriously impair the smooth functioning of the Government at the Centre. The split that has now occurred is all the more critical because it finds the Prime Minister on the other side of the street from her two senior Cabinet Colleagues, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Home Minister who were among the four who would not accept her nominee. Though she did not mention names she implied at her Press Conference that these four leaders had been less than honest with her in the matter and also that the way their voting went had strong connection with her own 'views and attitudes on some economic, social and foreign policies'. Only a few hours earlier the A.I.C.C. had adopted an economic policy resolution which incorporated in toto her views on the subject and which had been moved by Mr. Morarji Desai and seconded by Mr. Chavan. All these differences and mutual recriminations do not bode well for the administration at the Centre and for the nation. At no time has the country needed a strong and united Government at the Centre than

today when unrest and violence stalk the land, when subversive elements are busy gnawing away at the roots of national unity and stability”

A direct sequel to the split in Bangalore was the sudden dismissal of Morarji Desai from the Union Cabinet and the proclamation of an ordinance nationalising 14 top banks. The Hindu described the ordinance as a “thunderbolt” and said it might turn out to be a “misadventure” but added: “All the same this far-reaching step has been taken and it has to be faced”.

“Heading for chaos” was the title given to a leading article in August in which The Hindu wrote: “An apprehensive nation watches helplessly the cynical game of brinkmanship being played in the capital speeding it to the edge of the precipice. The one thing that has become clear from all this is the unmistakable transition of the leadership of the ruling Congress Party from public service to the unashamed pursuit of power for its own sake. The reports flying about of moves and counter-moves between what is getting more and more identified as two warring groups within the party may tend to colour the facts one way or the other. It may really not matter to the people at large which of the contestants is elected to the high but non-political office of President were it not also for the seemingly inevitable showdown and an open split within the Congress Party that may follow it and the imponderable consequences to the country. The sorry spectacle of United Front Governments in some states is there for all to see and to warn the leaders and the people of what will happen if the Congress Government at the Centre is to break up suddenly and possibly be replaced by a rickety coalition of that kind. With not a single party or even a group of like minded parties at the moment to succeed the Congress and ensure the continuity of stable government at the Centre, the power struggle within the party amounts to playing with the destiny of 500 million people. . . History will not forgive either the old guard or the Prime Minister if, in the uncontrolled boiling up of their personal or group squabbles they expose the country to chaos and instability. Nor can they forget that it is not by extremist adventurism of the left or right brand, that this old party with its tradition of sacrifice and service had managed to steer this country through the first two decades as a free nation. The incessant war of nerves and the threats of extremist action cannot but undermine the tradition of compromise by which conflicting pulls were harmonised into action acceptable to most sections of public opinion. The section of the party which lets its personal or group interest to drive it to gamble with the prospect of even breaking up the party, rather than lose face, would stand obviously self-condemned before the people”

When in the Presidential election the Opposition candidate, V. V. Giri, emerged victor, defeating the Congress candidate, Sanjiva Reddi, The Hindu said: “By openly coming out against Sanjiva Reddi, the party’s own candidate, and mobilising all means at her command to bring about the success of Mr. Giri, supported by the opposition parties, notably the Communists, the Prime Minister has burnt most of her party bridges. . . The tactics adopted by Mrs. Gandhi have tarnished her image at home and abroad. They have also invited with justification disciplinary action against her and her followers who have dared fight the official candidate just because her own nominee was rejected by the appropriate body set up to make such a choice. Each new move of hers took her farther and farther from the party managers.

The differences between the two groups have become too deep to be composed now that she has actually contrived Mr Sanjiva Reddi's defeat and so of the Congress itself by its political opponents".

The Congress Party crisis continued in November, 1969 with the Prime Minister dismissing four junior Ministers owing allegiance to the "Syndicate" (as the Congress old guard was styled) and the Congress President, Mr. Nijalingappa, removing two of her close supporters from his Working Committee. The Hindu wrote: "Both the Prime Minister and the 'Syndicate' must realise that whatever their respective stakes in the present inter-party feud be, the country has a bigger stake in the Congress Party continuing in power at New Delhi for as we have repeatedly pointed out, it alone among all the political parties in the country severally or jointly is in a position to provide a stable administration. Late as it may look, it is not too late for the Prime Minister and the 'Syndicate' to make an effort to patch up their differences through a process of give and take. Any attempt by either to carry the feud to the point of no return can spell nothing but ill for the whole country. There may be some people and political groups who would like the Congress to split and be pulled down from the saddle of Government at the Centre. But surely this cannot be what the Prime Minister wants or is it that she doesn't care?"

Mrs. Gandhi was expelled from the party on November 12, 1969 and her government became a minority government when 60 members of the Congress Party in the Lok Sabha elected to remain with the "Old guard" out of the total strength of 282. The Hindu commented: "It is an inescapable fact that Mrs. Gandhi's Ministry can hereafter exist only by courtesy of the Communists. There will of course be the price to pay for such support on every crucial occasion, a price that may often make a mockery of the avowed policy commitments of the Prime Minister's group and compel Government to engage in horse trading. Is it for this position of perpetual weakness from which to herald her brave new world of dynamic change that the Prime Minister so assiduously worked all these days?"

The Hindu noted on November 24 that "with the conclusion of the two-day session of the requisitionists' meeting of the members of the A.I.C.C. in New Delhi the seal has been set on the final break-up of the Indian National Congress. The political doctors can safely pronounce the old party clinically dead and beyond resuscitation by peace-makers. There is no doubt Mrs. Indira Gandhi has come on top in the numbers game. She has far more Congress MPs with her and far more A.I.C.C. members than the other side". The Hindu felt that Mrs. Gandhi "should seek a fresh mandate but at the same time we would urge that at least on this occasion constitutional proprieties are meticulously observed".

And when the President dissolved Parliament on the advice of the Prime Minister on December 28, 1970 and ordered elections, The Hindu welcomed the step and said: "The decision of the Prime Minister to face the people even ahead of time is on the whole to be welcomed. Too many things have tended to be done since the Congress split in the name of the people that it is time they had their say not only on the policies and programmes but the extraordinary ways in which these policies were sought to be executed. And against the background of the desperate expedients, horse trading and prevarications to which the minority Government had to resort to just to stay on in the saddle,

while the colossal problems confronting the nation needed a strong and stable Government to tackle them, it will be the ardent hope of everyone that the people would vote wisely, vote only those persons into Parliament who will have sufficient wisdom and strength to steer the country properly along the admittedly very difficult road ahead"

The elections were a walk over for Indira Gandhi and in Madras for her poll ally the D M K. Acknowledging that the people had "returned a clear and unequivocal verdict", *The Hindu* wrote on March 12, 1971: "The overwhelming strength that the Prime Minister has been given in the fifth Lok Sabha must have come as a pleasant surprise even to her, confident as she was of improving her position through what was considered by many a political gamble. Critical as we ourselves were of some of their policies and postures, we have no hesitation in hailing this unmistakably stupendous achievement of the Congress (R) and its poll ally. Nor do we flinch from owning up the error of our assessment of their electoral prospects. . . And from the nature of the wholly one-sided results it seems safe to presume that what prevailed with millions of voters distributed in different parts of this vast sub-continent is the image of Mrs. Gandhi. That alone may account for even mediocre Congress (R) candidates winning decisively. . . Nor has the cry of democracy in danger raised by the four-Party (Congress (O), Jan Sangh, Swatantra and Samyukta Socialists) alliance cut any ice with the millions steeped as they are in abysmal poverty. . . By wholly ridding the Congress (R) of its confusing dependence on left adventurists, the people obviously expect a dynamic but moderate and practical programme of action to deal with the mounting problems of a burgeoning population, widespread unemployment and economic stagnation. The responsibility to use the new strength wisely and well has now been placed on Mrs. Gandhi and her party".

Referring to D.M.K. victory in Tamil Nadu where it inflicted "a crushing defeat on the democratic front led by Mr. Kamaraj", *The Hindu* said its "majority in the State Assembly seems to have exceeded even its most optimistic expectations." The *Hindu* added: "The immense confidence placed in the D.M.K. by the electorate of Tamil Nadu calls in return for a vigorous effort to provide a clean administration without excessive party interference and the creation of a climate of harmony and orderliness so vital to the economic growth and prosperity of the state".

A feature of *The Hindu* editorials after the war with China was the vigorous plea for closer friendship and relations with the United States and for *The Hindu* the question became more urgent when China exploded a nuclear device in November, 1964. The *Hindu* wrote the time had come for a dynamic change in foreign policy. While agreeing that India could not enter the nuclear race herself both from the economic point of view and the moral and the historical stand India had taken on this issue hitherto, *The Hindu* said the necessary consequence of this admission "is that we must redraw our foreign policy so that we may have the support of a nuclear power to come to our defence in the event of a renewed Chinese threat. There are many who feel that some form of alignment with the Western democracies, consistently with the preservation of our independence, is inescapable if we are to seek a realistic and effective answer, to the Chinese menace".

The Hindu said. "The compulsions of our defence needs and our economic position make it necessary that we should seek specific understandings with the West and if Moscow is willing, with the Soviet Union also, for the defence of our country in the event of a Chinese attack. At the same time these understandings have to be within the framework of a broader policy which refuses to admit the ideological division of the world as permanent and unbridgeable. The residual value of the non-alignment concept must be primarily in its utility as a contributing factor in lessening East-West differences and promoting the conditions of detente". The Hindu added: "We need to cultivate all the friends we have and win more wherever we may find them".

The Hindu developed this theme on September 30, 1965, when it took stock of the situation following the Indo-Pakistan war. It declared that it was apparent we would have to face a hostile Pakistan and China for a long time to come. "We should naturally build up our strength to stand up to these foes. It would at the same time make our task of resisting aggression easier if we had the active support of some important countries. We should therefore bend our efforts to making new stauncher friendships than we have so far done". The Hindu said "If the containment of China is the major long-term problem in Asia it becomes obvious that the U.S. and India should act in close concert. India today is an oasis of freedom in the midst of a desert of totalitarianism in Asia. The United States which has stood out in post-war years as the authentic champion of the democratic world must not make a mistake about what is really at stake in India. India's record as a secular democracy is unmatched and on its continued well-being would seem to depend the survival of democracy itself in this vast part of the world. Therefore it is in the interests of preserving the treasured principle of Government by consent that India is enabled to become strong enough to withstand the unholy pressure of its totalitarian neighbours. In a meaningful India-U.S. entente supported by other democratic countries like Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia lies the best hope for democracy and freedom in Asia and peace in the world. It is towards forging such an association that India and the U.S. should work. They have no time to lose and they have no cause to fear that Russia, which is also deeply interested in peace will interpret such a development as inimical to its interests. Nor need it affect in any way the understanding and friendship that have grown between the Soviet Union and India over the past 15 years. Russia, in our opinion, would only welcome such a development which is aimed at ensuring a world of peace and of peaceful co-existence by holding at bay the one force threatening it the most, China"

The Hindu paid a striking tribute to President Kennedy of U.S.A. when it condemned his assassination on November 23, 1963. It said his death was a heavy loss not only to the U.S. but to the whole world. "We in this country", it wrote, "will cherish his memory with gratitude for the understanding, sympathy with which the U.S. Government on his wise initiative contributed in a large measure to our plans for economic development. And when this constructive process was rudely interrupted by the Chinese invasion his Government's response to India's appeal for arms for her defence against sudden and unprovoked aggression was equally prompt and unstinted. All this was in line with Mr. Kennedy's determined policy of promoting peace and prosperity in all parts of the globe. . . . There is little doubt that in the last few

years President Kennedy did much to change the image of the U.S. in the newly emerging countries from one of a wealthy great power into one of a friendly and democratic republic that was anxious to help others to help themselves". In another tribute on the day of his funeral, *The Hindu* wrote: "It was not merely the circumstances of his tragic death that elicited the sympathy of peoples all over the world . . . It was a deeper recognition of all that President Kennedy symbolised as the head of the most powerful and affluent democratic country on whom rested an immense responsibility for the wise and beneficent direction of American policy in a dangerously divided world. The ringing words in which he had pledged himself in his inaugural address to dedicate his energies not only to the service of his nation but to the cause of freedom and a better life for people everywhere had found an echo in many countries. Young as he was he had come to represent all that was greatest in the American tradition from Jefferson to Franklin Roosevelt. The wisdom, courage and resolution with which he handled the many difficult issues that had arisen during his first two years as President had aroused great hopes that our tortured world had found in him a great leader who could be relied upon in concert with other leaders including those in the Soviet Bloc to rescue the world from the menace of nuclear war and the cruel burden of an absurd arms race".

When Queen Elizabeth of Britain landed in Delhi on January 20, 1961 on a state visit, *The Hindu* offered her a gracious welcome. "Forgotten", it wrote, "are the evils of the alien rule and gone is the bitterness of the struggle for freedom that her leaders and her people waged against the British. What remains is glad recognition of the close ties between the two countries built up by tradition and history and the assurance and faith that the two free countries have very similar objectives and will strive with all means in their power to promote peace and friendship among the nations. India has the rich legacy of democratic freedom under law that the British have left with us of representative and responsible Government alive to the needs of the people and active in meeting them. Above all, there is the precious heritage of the English language with its glorious literature which has nurtured our great leaders and continues to be the main channel of communication between different parts of India and between India and the modern world".

When the Russians launched their first spaceship on May 16, 1960, *The Hindu* described the achievement as a "triumph of the human mind and spirit". But it was worried that the "race between the U.S.S.R and the U.S. is full of lethal possibilities unless an agreement is reached effectively to outlaw war". It said: "It will be a relief to all men if the race for the mastery of space, instead of being conducted on a cutthroat national basis is carried out by co-operation among all countries".

*The Hindu* said it was a "staggering achievement" when the Russians sent a man into space in April, 1961. "Our scientists and technologists are converting into realities one dream after another of our fiction writers, several of whom were motivated by utopian idealism . . . . We are living in times when accepted ideas are being profoundly affected by major scientific triumphs. There is a growing belief that man's complete conquest of nature is only a matter of time". When the Americans landed their first spacemen, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin, on the moon on July 21, 1969, *The Hindu* wrote: "In his eternal

drive for enlarging his frontiers of knowledge and environment man has made many dramatic advances in the past but they all pale into secondary importance before the epic feat of Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin who landed on the moon last night and after a successful visit are now heading back for home.

The whole world applauds their achievement which is also the achievement of American science and technology. It will take sometime for millions of earthdwellers to realise the full significance of the fact that human beings like themselves have actually set foot on the moon, that familiar heavenly body which has been celebrated in poetry and legend for thousands of years as a symbol of inaccessible beauty."

When Pakistan declared war on India for a third time early in December, 1971, *The Hindu* said, "The root cause of this war is to be found not in Kashmir but in Bangladesh where Islamabad has refused to honour its election promises. Now that Pakistan has declared war there can be no further inhibition on Indian intervention in East Bengal. We should move fast to crush the oppressor and help East Bengalis to become masters in their own house. We will be thus ending a colonial situation in our own neighbourhood which led to the flight of nearly 10 million refugees into our country in search of sanctuary. . . It has been repeatedly made clear that India has no territorial ambitions either in the east or west, but if Pakistan decides to drive into our country, it will have to be dealt powerful retaliatory blows. Foreign opinion has tended to sympathise with Pakistan in the past because it is the smaller country. But Pakistan has concentrated its resources on military weapons and has become a formidable fighting force despite its smaller population. It calls upon religious fanaticism to launch a do-or-die offensive (jihad) against "the infidel". We cannot therefore afford to underestimate the enemy or handle him with kid gloves. This time our military men should not be hampered by instructions to pull their punches. Yahya Khan has chosen the path of war and he must be given a crushing reply".

With the formal surrender of the Pakistan Army in Dacca on December 16, 1971, the war in the eastern sector ended and Bangla Desh was born. *The Hindu* told Pakistan: "The rulers of Pakistan should be realistic enough to see that it will be even more difficult in the future than in the past to challenge India in Kashmir or elsewhere. . . . The people of Pakistan could rest assured that if their leaders followed constructive policy and gave up their hatred of India and what it stands for they would get India's fullest co-operation"



# A Decade of Progress and Travail

53

**T**HE DECADE 1963 to 1973 witnessed tremendous progress in the organisation, and display of news and distribution of The Hindu and it scored many "firsts" in these fields. In September, 1963 The Hindu flew its own planes to distribute its copies in the southern region to its readers who had the distinction of reading their morning paper at about the same time as the reader in Madras did. It was not the first time that The Hindu had sent its copies through an aeroplane. In April, 1962 it was the first newspaper in India to charter an Indian Airlines Corporation's Dakota to carry The Hindu to Bangalore, Coimbatore and Madurai and the areas round them. Previously road transport was used to the extent possible. In September, 1963 The Hindu acquired four Heron aircraft and used two of them, one on the Tiruchi-Madurai route and the other on the Bangalore-Coimbatore area.

September 29 was a historic day for The Hindu and a report in the papers said: "Meenambakkam airport to-day witnessed a unique event in the history of world journalism. Amidst the enthusiastic cheers of a large gathering which had assembled to give it a send-off, a four-engined Heron belonging to The Hindu took off in the early morning hours carrying copies of its morning edition to destinations in the south. This event marks another great step forward in The Hindu's long record of service to its readers".

"A progressive newspaper", said The Hindu, "has a natural obligation to give its readers better and better service, not only as regards comprehensiveness of its coverage of news and views but also in the matter of speedy delivery of copies. A few years ago there was nothing so old as yesterday's newspaper but in the present hectic world where situations change with bewildering speed a newspaper runs the risk of growing old within a few hours of its rolling off the presses. It has to be placed in the hands of the reader while the news it purveys is still "hot" if he is to be kept abreast of happenings around him. This is why The Hindu has taken the step of acquiring its own fleet of aeroplanes for delivering copies of the paper to its far flung readers. The Hindu was the first newspaper to resort extensively to air transport. Ever since air routes were opened copies of the paper began to be flown regularly to whatever centres could be reached by the commercial airlines. This was satisfactory only to a limited extent because the normal Indian Airlines schedules and routes were found to be not adequate for widespread and

expeditious distribution of the paper. So last year, The Hindu arranged for a special early morning service of the I A C for delivering copies to Bangalore, Coimbatore and Madurai. But due to limitations of load and time even this arrangement could not meet its target of reader service; it was not able to reach all its readers by the morning. It was therefore decided to acquire an airfleet of its own. The first two of these planes have gone into service, carrying copies of The Hindu to Bangalore, Coimbatore and Tiruchi and Madurai. Special arrangements have been made at these points for speedy onward transmission of copies to other places in the respective regions."

"From today", The Hindu said, "the readers of The Hindu in most parts of Mysore State and the districts of Coimbatore, Madurai, Ramnad, Tirunelveli, Tiruchi and Tanjore can expect to get their copy of the paper at about the same time as the reader in Madras city. When the other two Herons of the fleet go into operation, which will be soon, more areas in Madras and other southern states will be reached".

The Hindu featured this story on Page one with a four-column picture of The Hindu plane. The next stage in the rapid transmission of the paper to the readers' hand came in July, 1965 when the Dak edition, which was an evening edition which reached its destination by rail the next morning, was abolished and all readers wherever they might be and whatever the distance got the morning edition of the paper. This was made possible by a judicious combination of air, rail and road transport and the circulation department ensured that the reader in the farthest area got his paper before noon on the same day. This was a revolutionary step and an age old practice in which the mofussil reader was always behind the news by almost 24 hours was ended with one bold stroke. The impact of this was seen in the spurt in circulation and the hundreds of congratulatory letters from grateful readers received by The Hindu.

In February, 1964, The Hindu purchased a Dakota and extended its distribution by air to Trivandrum and Cochin and later to Hyderabad and Vijayawada.

A striking feat achieved by The Hindu through its air service was when in November, 1963 it carried the news of the assassination of President Kennedy of U.S.A. in its air edition circulating in the southern districts. The news broke out in the early hours of the morning when the air edition copies had already been printed and dispatched to the airport and one plane had actually left the airfield on its onward journey. The decision was taken to carry the news in the air edition and the plane already on its flight was recalled and the printed copies were taken back. The rotary printed again more than the usual number of copies for the air edition carrying the news of the assassination in banner heading and these were dispatched by plane.

A still more revolutionary advance of The Hindu occurred when it produced the first facsimile edition in India in Coimbatore in July, 1969. The Coimbatore Correspondent reported this landmark in Indian journalism in a dispatch on July 26, 1969. "A new step forward", he said, "in the development of the Indian Press was taken today when The Hindu came out this morning with a facsimile edition of the paper in Coimbatore. This is the first time a newspaper in India is using this advanced electronic process for publishing an away-from-headquarters edition. Under this process pictures of the various pages (page-proofs) of the paper edited and composed in Madras are transmitted to

Coimbatore over the telephone coaxial cable and from the facsimile zinc engravings are made and the paper printed here”

The Correspondent added “The Managing Editor, Mr G. Narasimhan, and the Editor, Mr G. Kasturi, were present here when the first issues of the new Edition rolled off the press early this morning. The publication of this Coimbatore Edition has been widely welcomed by The Hindu’s readers and well-wishers here”

The Coimbatore edition covered most of Kerala and part of Tamil Nadu. A second facsimile unit was set up in Bangalore on April 30, 1970 and it covered the whole of Mysore State and part of Andhra Pradesh. A third facsimile unit was opened in Hyderabad in 1976 and a fourth is due to be opened in Madurai towards the end of 1978

From 1963 onwards The Hindu was undergoing a metamorphosis on the news and display side. Something new was appearing with bewildering rapidity and the reader could observe that the paper was in the throes of a new birth. The first indication was the change in the format of the Editorial page which hitherto had featured news besides editorials with an occasional article thrown in. All that was changed now and the Editorial page became a views page pure and simple. Besides the editorials, which were shorter and fewer in number, it featured articles on topics of the day contributed by Indians and foreigners and letters to the Editor, which had been pushed to a back page, were made a permanent feature of the Editorial page. Among the earliest features on this page were Emery Kelen’s Who’s What, the International Scene (which appeared on Sundays) and the “Man in the News” which gave a pen picture of the men and women who made news and was written by competent journalists.

A boxed item on the Editorial page on April 15, 1965, heralded more revolutionary changes in the presentation and display of news. “You will have seen”, the Editor said, “that on this and other pages we have made changes in the general lay-out and headings to facilitate easier and better reading of the editorials, articles, features and news. We hope you like them”.

An important change in the presentation of stories on page one was to make them self-contained and avoid carrying them over to inside pages. The Hindu was probably the first in India to carry out this reform which enabled the reader to read page one as a whole without having to turn over the inside pages to finish a story which started on the first page. And it must have been the most difficult thing for The Hindu to do because in its long career it had acquired the habit of grouping stories by adding all related matter to any important story and presenting it as one continuous narrative which sometimes spilled over many pages. The advantage in this was that the reader knew and read all about one story and its connected matter at one go and in one allotted space, although it involved shifting the pages again and again. But the modern reader does not have the patience or the time to wade through the long columns of print and would like shorter and crisper stories and this was what The Hindu attempted to do by its reformation of page one. It presented the reader all the important stories of the day on page one in a concise form, leaving it to him to read them in greater detail in inside pages if he chose to.

A typical page one of The Hindu in 1965 carried one or more pictures with atleast three major-stories displayed in three and double columns. Boxes and

panels appeared at a later stage, making the page more attractive and yet another reform was the introduction of "News in a Nutshell" in the first column.

On the Editorial page there was a main article distributed over four columns and a subsidiary one and the Letters to the Editor were spread over at the bottom. A weekly feature was "The Economic Front" by The Hindu's industrial Correspondent, H. Venkatasubbiah. K. Rangaswami wrote the weekly Delhi Letter which was both factual and analytic and read with great interest. Rangaswami was succeeded in 1969 by G. K. Reddy.

Under the title "Among the Nations" The Hindu's foreign Correspondents in London, New York, Colombo, Tokyo, Bonn, Canberra, Singapore and Nairobi wrote fortnightly articles and the page also carried weekly newsletters from its Correspondents in the state capitals. For sometime book reviews were carried on this page on Sundays but later it resumed its old position in the Magazine section. Still later it became part of a three-page education feature which appeared every Tuesday. The Delhi-based Correspondents, who were given the by-line of "Special Correspondents" for their news stories, had the satisfaction of seeing their names in the by-line to the articles and features they contributed to the Edit. page. E. K. Ramaswami wrote on the "Week in Parliament", M. Pattabhiram on "Random Notes from the Capital", B. S. Padmanabhan on "Our Scientists" and Padmanabha Rao supplied "Supreme Court Dicta".

E. K. R., as he was affectionately called by his colleagues in the office and in the profession, also introduced a feature "Parliament Gallery" which was a who's who of members of Parliament. Unfortunately his life was cut short at the early age of 47 in March 1968. Reporting his death The Hindu said: "He joined the Delhi Office in 1954 after having worked as a reporter at the head office in Madras from 1945. In his long career of 25 years as a journalist E. K. Ramaswami covered a variety of engagements. He was a keen student of defence matters and never missed a single debate in Parliament on subjects pertaining to defence. He was personally known to the chiefs of staff of the Army, Navy and Air Force. During the war with China he went to the war front and stayed there under very trying circumstances. Later when India was engaged in a war with Pakistan he was in the forward areas and wrote special dispatches from the several war fronts. He was a familiar figure at Kamaraj's residence in Delhi when the latter was Congress President. He had a special interest in writing about political personages and his "Parliament Gallery" in The Hindu was always read with avid interest. He covered the tour of the Chinese Prime Minister in India in 1956. He visited West Pakistan in 1953 and covered the Assembly proceedings there. He was a much travelled man having visited U.S.A., Germany and Viet Nam. An outstanding quality of E. K. R. was his sense of humour. At a party at Nehru's house he surprised the Prime Minister by imitating one of his speeches."

Besides the features we have mentioned there were many others including "Farmers Note-book" by the Agriculture Correspondent, the first on the staff of an Indian newspaper, Leo's (P. A. Seshan) financial news and notes, "Key to our car" (which appeared on page 2 in the midst of advertisements), "Know our city" (written by Staff Correspondents) and District news letters. The old Engineering page which was one of the oldest and popular features of The

Hindu acquired new importance and prominence in recent days with the title changed to "Science and Engineering Technology".

Most important of all the innovations was the introduction of a feature on religion which appeared six days in the week on the first column in the last page. It was introduced by Kasturi Gopalan in April, 1964 and was very popular. The feature contained the essence of discourses given in Madras city on the Ramayanam, Mahabharatam and Bhagavatham by Hindu Pandits and scholars. Kasturi Gopalan personally edited the Reporter's copy and scrutinised every line that appeared in print. He had imposed on himself a strict code of ethics and conduct and he translated them in the feature on religion.

Among foreign features were two, "Know your Latin America" by Easwar Sagar and "Know your Africa" by Batuk Gathani, which were highly informative and educative. In recent years Art Buchwald the well known American humourist made his appearance on the editorial page as also some of the distinguished columnists of the New York Times like James Reston and Walter Sullivan. A special feature of the Editorial page was the introduction of specialised comment by Editorial writers under the headings "Spotlight", "Background" and "News Analysis".

A special Friday page was introduced both in the city and in the regional editions and it became the arts page of The Hindu in which the cinema, the music hall, dance, drama, and art gallery found a place. In the Friday page additional space was found to carry staff reporters' stories and there was a special column for the Staff Correspondents' Diary. For the horticulturist there was "In the garden", a series contributed by the Agricultural Correspondent. And The Hindu had an ace photographer in K. Narayanachari who combined in himself a one man reporter-cum-photographer and who won many awards for his proficiency in that art.

The sports page was considered a speciality of The Hindu. The general facelift which was given to The Hindu affected it in greater measure. More features and more exclusive articles were carried on this page in every department of sport but for The Hindu its favourites were cricket and racing. Its sports editor, S. K. Guruswami, was well-known in international cricket circles as a great sports journalist and cricket commentator and the Cricket Annual which he published for The Hindu was regarded as an authoritative book on everything connected with Cricket. Guruswami travelled far and wide going out with every Indian Cricket team abroad, to London, Australia, West Indies, Pakistan and Sri Lanka to report for The Hindu and inside India he accompanied every touring team. Unfortunately he died when he had still many years to contribute to the paper he loved and the sport he worshipped. Among the foreign cricket commentators employed by The Hindu J. Fingleton was the most famous and later he also became the news correspondent of The Hindu in Canberra.

The new Editor, G. Kasturi, who took over in September 1965, launched on a policy of appointing staff correspondents in all District headquarter towns and in the state capitals wherever they had not already been appointed. Part-time correspondents and occasional correspondents in the nooks and corners of the southern region who for over 80 years had helped to keep The Hindu reader posted with political happenings and events in the official world were replaced by trained and qualified full-time journalists who were encouraged

to go out and investigate and report what they saw and heard with their own eyes and ears without transmitting secondhand or officially inspired reports. There was a new spirit of enquiry and an earnestness to get at the truth of any matter and a fearlessness which refused to be intimidated or coerced by official or non-official displeasure. The Hindu Correspondents' reports from the districts were marked by facts and statistics gathered by their own efforts and enabled the reader to have a complete picture of any given situation. Investigative stories rolled from the mofussil in ever increasing number and officials and politicians had to sit up and take notice of them for they related to matters which agitated public opinion.

The Hindu strengthened its staff in the national capital and the stories that appeared from its Delhi staff were as good if not better and full as in any Delhi newspaper. It had its own staff photographer stationed in the capital and page one had one picture or other almost daily wired by photographer Ganapathy.

The reporters in Madras underwent a reorientation course too. The men who sat in their chairs over the years had prided themselves on reporting political and official speeches in extenso and in flawless English, so much so they achieved an all India reputation for accuracy and efficiency. They scooped official news about appointments in high places or decisions on administrative problems of interest mainly to officials. But generally they were "given" news by officials and non-officials and they rarely went beyond the news given to them. In other words, they never investigated, did not probe and produce their own stories. It was this which was attempted now. Reporters were assigned subjects, like Education, Law and Order, Medical, Industry, Local Bodies, Political etc. in which they should specialise instead of being one among many and calling at the various government departments, hospitals and police headquarters and receiving previously prepared handouts. The new scheme resulted in The Hindu reporters acquiring an identity of their own, a style of their own and writing a story as they felt and not to dictation. In recent months The Hindu has appointed Education and Science Correspondents who have contributed specialised articles regularly.

Readers were encouraged to write on controversial and non-controversial subjects, on official lapses, politicians' mistakes and on social and economic topics. There have been free and frank discussions in the Letters to Editor column on many vital matters and also on purely academic issues but whatever they might be they made the paper exciting and educative and gave it a unique character and personality. The reader found in it a forum to ventilate his grievances of a public nature and present his views on national and regional affairs without inhibition. The Hindu probably is the only newspaper in India to give so much prominence and space to letters from its readers.

Towards the end of 1977, The Hindu introduced three more new features which have proved to be very popular. The first of these is called "Outlook" in which the reader is presented with the verbatim report of a 3-hour discussion by a distinguished panel of experts on any specified subject, chosen by the Editor. The panel is selected from all parts of the country and the participants include men and women who have achieved distinction in their fields of work. Their number may be five, six or seven, and they are given complete freedom to express their views, The Hindu merely tape-recording the debate and presenting them to the reader in full and without editing. Many important and topical

subjects like the problem of the handicapped, population control and position of women have been considered by these panels and their discussions are published in a four-page report on a Wednesday once every month.

The second, which is a one-page feature is called "Special Report" which carries short articles from Special Correspondents, industrialists and others on management and labour and other topics of interest to the general reader. The feature is published once every month.

The third, also a one-page feature is called "Open Page" and it is the reader's page. It affords readers an opportunity to think aloud on burning problems of the day and suggest solutions. It is also a monthly feature.

A Sports Weekly, Sportstar, a sister publication of The Hindu, devoted entirely to sports saw the light of day in the middle of 1978. Its predecessor, Sport and Pastime, which made a mark in sports journalism, had to be closed following labour trouble in 1968.

The weekly magazine section of The Hindu was made brighter and colourful by publication of colour pictures and advertisements. The pictures told the story of our cottage industries, tribal customs and of our projects and rural areas. A prestigious annual publication of The Hindu is The Hindu Survey of Industry, which beginning in a small way in 1955 grew to big proportions in later years under the stewardship of P. A. Seshan, the Financial Editor. It is today an authoritative and popular guide to Indian industry both in the public and private sectors.

The Hindu suffered a grievous loss in February 1961 when its publisher, Srinivasan Parthasarathy, passed away at a young age, "in the very prime of a life full of promise" as The Hindu said in a tribute. It added: "Mr. Parthasarathy radiated cheerfulness and he cultivated many interests outside his work. He was a keen motorist and horseman and a patron of the turf. Wherever he was and whatever he did he had a genius for making friends and as members of the staff of The Hindu would proudly testify he had reserves of compassion and understanding rare in so young".

The Hindu had its share of labour troubles which erupted even during the life time of Kasturi Srinivasan as we have seen. But in October, 1967 and again late in 1968 it passed through an ordeal the severity and the enormous loss of which it had not experienced in all its 90 years of existence. It had to close down publication from October 24, 1967 for a month. When it resumed on November 24, 1967, The Hindu wrote: "After a break of 30 days The Hindu resumes publication today with the fervent hope that never again will a situation be created which will compel it to suspend publication at any time in the future. A newspaper is different from other industrial undertakings in the sense that when it ceases operations the general public stands to lose as much perhaps even more as its own management and staff".

The Hindu said what started as management-labour differences over the payment of bonus was taken by the Labour Union to a point where the management was left with no alternative but to take the step it did. It was only thanks to the intervention of the Chief Minister, Mr. C. N. Annadurai, that the dispute could eventually be settled and the paper enabled to resume. What happened in our case is however not unique. There have been many other instances lately where what is viewed by the public as a simple management-labour dispute over payment of bonus or some point involving discipline is

really a facade behind which labour leaders seek to throw up issues fraught with serious consequences for the efficient functioning of industry. The reason for this trend lies in the way trade unionism is developing in our country where influence over labour organisations is often wielded by persons who have nothing in common with the group of workers or industry involved but have a vested interest in industrial unrest and are more bent on agitation than on peace, more intent on safeguarding their own positions than on promoting the overall welfare of the workers. This is not to say that industrial managements are all paragons of virtue. There are of course good managements and bad. But what is being witnessed today is a calculated attempt to create the impression that all managements are *per se* bad and any proposal emanating from them cannot but be detrimental to Labour and even to the national interest. Such thinking given the slightest encouragement could prove to be the biggest impediment to industrial peace and progress."

The readers of *The Hindu* heaved a great sigh of relief when their favourite newspaper was back again on the newsstands. In the next few days *The Hindu* published scores of letters which expressed with depth of feeling the void created by the absence of *The Hindu*. One reader wrote "I used to hear people remark in buses and trains, in roads and street corners, in offices and restaurants that the standard and value of *The Hindu* are realised in its absence. Such was the void the suspension had created. It has become a part and parcel of the daily life of many like me and suddenly to go without it had left a sense of incompleteness in our lives".

Another said "To put it emphatically, the auspicious appearance of *The Hindu* in the early hours and the faithful reading of it have become a daily routine and habit, nay a part and parcel of one's life. How the readers remained all these days without this daily desideratum is really a difficult experience to be explained". A doctor wrote: "After food, clothing and shelter for a south Indian like me comes *The Hindu*. How much I have lost these days without the morning's greetings in the way of reading the columns of your paper even with the cup that cheers (I mean coffee) by my side will be known only to those accustomed to this way of life. Wherever I have gone in India, from the Cape to Kashmir, I have always arranged to get my copy of *The Hindu*".

"*The Hindu* is not a good newspaper but a bad habit", said yet another reader. "Many try but are not able to give up smoking. It is about the same with your esteemed daily. For my part I have successfully given up smoking".

Here is a quote from one more reader. "Its (*The Hindu's*) absence every morning created a void in my life . . . but its absence was also a blessing in disguise as it helped readers to realise the high standard of the publication for the readers' attention was directed to other newspapers which did not satisfy them".

But to the regret of these numerous readers *The Hindu* had again to pass through the travail of closure for the longest period in its existence when in 1968 it shut down from August 20 to November 1. "We resume publication today", *The Hindu* wrote on November 2, "after an agonising break of 72 days, a break brought about by circumstances not of the newspaper's making. The suspension of publication has been the more painful for the newspaper because of the knowledge that a large section of the public has through the decades come to look to it for reliable and upto-date information and



disinterested guidance and the newspaper was prevented from rendering this service to its readers at a particularly eventful period of human affairs . For the great inconvenience caused to our readers and also to the vast number of advertisers who have found in *The Hindu* a most effective medium for bringing their product to the notice of the buying public we tender our apologies and would like to assure our well wishers that it will be the newspaper's endeavour to do all in its power to prevent a repetition of the unhappy experience of the ten weeks. Though officially classified as an industry a newspaper is totally different from any other industry. Like time, what is lost when a newspaper is shut down in terms of public service rendered, production, earning etc., cannot be recouped later. Rightly has a newspaper been described as a daily miracle and only wholehearted co-operation by all connected with its production can make the miracle come off. A newspaper is also an essential service for it serves to keep the people informed, a function vital for the successful operation of Democracy. If all those who have anything to do with newspapers — managements, workers, governments, politicians, trade union leaders, advertisers and the public in general — ever kept these facts in mind there should be no strike in newspapers. But what often happens is that any management-labour dispute in a newspaper establishment is seized upon by extraneous and extremist elements and exploited by them to disrupt the smooth functioning of the newspaper. This is a danger which everyone interested in the progress of our nascent democracy should help guard against. A settlement in *The Hindu's* case became possible thanks to effective final intervention by the State Ministers, Mr. M. Karunanidhi and Mr. V. R. Nedunchezian”.

Only a few months earlier, the President had chosen G. Narasimhan, Managing Editor of *The Hindu* for award of “Padma Bhushan” in Independence Day honours in recognition of the services rendered by the paper and for his own part in the development of *The Hindu* as a national newspaper.

It was at this time also that *The Hindu* received the World Press Achievement Award for 1968 of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association Foundation. The award was presented at a ceremonial luncheon in the grand Ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York on April 23, 1968. The gold medallion representing the award was received on behalf of *The Hindu* by G. Kasturi, Editor. Over 1500 distinguished publishers and editors from the U.S. and Canada were present at the luncheon, Easwar Sagar reported from New York.

The citation said: “Throughout nearly a century of its publication *The Hindu* has exerted wide influence not only in Madras but throughout India. Conservative in both tone and appearance, it has wide appeal to the English-speaking segment of the population and wide readership among government officials and business leaders. Its tabloid *Weekly Review* published since 1952 is relied upon by Indians abroad and Government and business leaders around the world for a picture of Indian life and current events. Politically *The Hindu* has been critical of the Indian Government's non-alignment policy and has been urging closer ties with the Democratic World. *The Hindu* has provided its readers a broad and balanced news coverage, enterprising reporting and a sober and thoughtful comment.

“Through 90 years of continuous publication *The Hindu* has provided its country a model of journalistic excellence . . . In a country beset with massive

problems, The Hindu provides a breadth and depth of coverage that illumines Indian national life and offers hope for national solutions. The Hindu has fought for a greater measure of humanity for India and its people. It has fought against untouchability, child marriages, dowries, the caste system and racial discrimination. It has resisted encroachment on civil liberties. It has pushed for limitation of families through birth control. But The Hindu has not confined itself to a narrow chauvinism. Its Correspondents stationed in the major capitals of the world furnish The Hindu world-wide news coverage — the equal of leading newspapers on every continent. For its championing of reason over emotion, for its dedication to principle even in the face of criticism and popular disapproval, for its confidence in the future, it has earned the respect of its community, its country, and the world. In recognition of these ideals and achievements the trustees of the A N P A. Foundation have selected The Hindu for the 1968 World Press Achievement Award”.

Easwar Sagar reported. “Mr. David Rockefeller, President of the Chase Manhattan Bank, was the principal guest speaker at the luncheon. Making the presentation on behalf of A N P A. Foundation, its President, Mr. Robert L. Taylor, said that against the backdrop of unusual suppression and harassment of the Press in many parts of the world there was also the happier picture of thousands of journalists in many countries pressing in a powerful tide against the barriers to free speech and truth. One of the criteria governing the Press Achievement Award was strong, independent and courageous editorial positions. The Hindu, he said, was a fitting successor to the previous award winners.

“Accepting the award, Mr. Kasturi said he would like to regard the honour the A.N.P.A. had conferred on his paper ‘as tribute also to the freedom of the Press that India enjoys. For this we owe not a little to the democratic foundation which Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru laid. Under Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s leadership, the position of the Press in India has, if anything, improved’. But today there were divisive and subversive forces he said, which threatened the very unity of the country and its democratic system. This situation posed a new responsibility and a new challenge to the national Press in India. Mr. Kasturi added. ‘The Hindu is convinced that the big threat to Democracy in India comes from militant communism, both domestic and foreign, mainly Chinese. It is this which has led the paper to suggest that India should adopt a more forward looking foreign policy taking into account the changing trends in the international situation and to urge closer association with the U.S. and other Democratic countries as the most effective means of meeting the communist threat. The Hindu has been persistent in pointing out that the future of peace and freedom in Asia depends to a large extent on meaningful co-operation between the world’s most powerful democracy, the U.S. and the most populous, India. These two countries should understand and trust each other more’ ”.

Three years earlier in March 1965, The Hindu was chosen as among the world’s 10 best newspapers by the London Times which ran a series of articles on the leading newspapers of the world. The Times described The Hindu as among India’s leading newspapers predominantly serious in content, style and presentation and among the five or six newspapers which the observer in Delhi would read. “The Hindu takes the general seriousness to lengths of severity ... The Hindu which is published in Madras is the only newspaper

which in spite of being published only in a provincial capital, is regularly and attentively read in Delhi. It is read not only as a distant and authoritative voice on national affairs but as an expression of the most liberal — and least provincial — southern attitudes. Since Independence *The Hindu* has continued by and large as an opposition paper but one whose fairness is conceded by all but the thinnest skinned Congressmen. Its disapproval of the ruling party's economic policies dissuaded it from supporting the Congress in any of the three General elections but neither has it endorsed other parties. Its Delhi Bureau gives it outstanding political and economic dispatches and it carries regular and frequent reports from all state capitals, so giving more news from states, other than its own than most newspapers in India. It might fairly be described as a national voice with a southern accent. *The Hindu* can claim to be the most respected paper in India.

In his book, *The Elite Press*, John C. Merrill wrote, "Of the several outstanding English language dailies of India, *The Hindu* of Madras enjoys an unrivalled reputation for reliability and concern for truthful and comprehensive news coverage. *The Hindu* alone among other national newspapers commands wide international respect as an authoritative expression of liberal and cosmopolitan attitudes. A London Times Correspondent writing from Delhi in 1965 described its sombre appearance by noting that its "heavy single columns march across the pages like Prussian guardsmen, grey and disciplined."

"It is valued for its intelligent tone, its literary style, its progressive spirit, its cosmopolitan emphasis and its forceful expression of opinion. From a historical perspective *The Hindu* has played a notable part in the development of Indian intellectualism, the growth of a free Press philosophy, and the bringing about of Indian independence. . . . It might be said that *The Hindu* looks like *The Times* of London and sounds like *the Guardian* and it is the combination of the tradition and spirit of these two British dailies in *The Hindu's* pages which has given it its special prestige and potency in Indian society. There is little doubt but that the paper is the most highly respected and influential daily of India and (considering its size and resources) one of the truly great papers of the world".

The country passed through a difficult period after 1972. As a result of widespread drought, high prices and food shortage, there was unrest and the economic crisis was aggravated by inflation. For *The Hindu*, as was the case with other papers, it became a question of survival because of the scarcity of newsprint and the high cost of what little was available for sharing. The price of the paper had to be put up to meet the increased costs and the number of pages of the daily issue reduced to the minimum. All the plans for improvements and new features had to be put in cold storage. The newsprint situation improved early in 1975 as did the economic situation. *The Hindu* found its feet again slowly and new features, such as "Know your District", the Saturday Sports special and Education page were introduced. A more significant development was the publication of an International Edition of *The Hindu*, in December, 1975, which was the same in size as the daily and more attractive than the old "Weekly Review", with circulation in U.S.A., Canada, Britain, Europe, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore.

*The Hindu* lost the last of its old connecting links when Kasturi Gopalan, second son of Kasturiranga Iyengar, and joint proprietor with Kasturi

Srinivasan, passed away in December 1974. He was the father of The Hindu sports page and also of the first column of the last page which features religion. As a young man he played tennis, hockey in which he won many medals playing for his college team and cricket but his greatest love was racing. When sports news was scarce in Madras in the early nineties he used to take cuttings from the British Press of reports of all the leading cricket matches and other sport and publish them in The Hindu. Thus he created an interest in sports among The Hindu readers and sustained it by constant improvement of the sports page and special coverage of foreign and Indian sports events. He made the sports page the most popular and one of the best in all India. He was orthodox in regard to religious matters and observances and was pure in heart and simple in his life. He was a lover of astrology and a sub-editor who was well versed in this art was constantly called by him to his room for discussion on planetary influences on racing. After the death of his brother, he presided over the daily Editorial conferences.

A reader of The Hindu, who probably knew him well, wrote of him. "The passing away of Mr. K. Gopalan marks the end of a life full of achievement, both spiritual and temporal. He was the last link with a distant past that saw the transformation of The Hindu from a storm-tossed views paper into the well-established complete newspaper of today. He holds one of the longest records of office attendance anywhere, namely 61 years from 1913 to 1974. And what a regular and punctual attendance! He was the envy of many a younger man. The tenacity with which Mr. Gopalan stuck to the orthodox approach to life was remarkable. Having seen the benefit of a life of faith and strict observance of ablution enjoined in the Shastras he preached it without hesitation to younger men who worked under him in the office and to those who had occasion to meet him. That he had many converts whose very dress, and habits saw a sea-change was all the more remarkable. He clearly showed that an orthodox way of life was not at all incompatible with or impossible under present day circumstances. All it needed was a little effort. . . . He was the doyen among journalists in Madras and the patriarch of the Kasturi family. The fragrance of his memory will last long".

Another reader wrote: "The life and work of the late Mr. Kasturi Gopalan has some significant lessons to our age and its young men and women who have no faith, believe in no creed and have dispensed with all codes of conduct in the name and glorification of personal freedom to establish a permissive society. He was a man of deep faith in God, guru and acharya (disciplined life as ordained by the scriptures). Those that have had some contact with him and seen him in his serene celestial abode know that his life was god-centred, theocentric and breathed an atmosphere of spiritual blessedness. He ordered his life like an ideal Vaishnava to the five-time worship of the Lord as laid down in the classic Panchatantra. He was a great believer in ritual and he knew its place and meaning and he observed them with meticulous care. . . . His life was guided by the twin doctrines of the Gita — duty and devotion. To the end he served The Hindu by his regular personal attendance and supervision. His was a life of devotion, full of service. He was enemy of none and friend of all".

S. Rangarajan, Kasturi Srinivasan's second son, succeeded Kasturi Gopalan as the Printer and Publisher of The Hindu.

The Hindu suffered another grievous loss within three years on July 3, 1977, when G. Narasimhan, its Managing Editor, passed away. He was 61. G. N., as he was affectionately called by his friends, of whom there were legion all over the country and abroad, was the eldest son of Kasturi Gopalan and his entire adult life was bound up with The Hindu. Graduating from the Presidency College, Madras, with an honours degree in history, he joined the paper on its business side and soon became its General Manager in 1937 when he was hardly 21. Professional honours came to him steadily and he was drafted to serve on various professional organisations, Indian and foreign. On the death of his famous uncle, Kasturi Srinivasan, in 1959, Narasimhan became the Managing Editor and Chairman of Kasturi and Sons Limited, Publishers of The Hindu. National recognition of his services to journalism came in 1968 when he was the recipient of Padma Bhushan award from the President of India.

His professional affiliations included the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society of which he was president in 1956-57, the Audit Bureau of Circulations (Chairman, 1958-59), the Indian section of the International Press Institute (Chairman, 1959), the Press Institute of India (President since its founding in 1968), the Press Foundation of India (Director since 1968) and the Commonwealth Press Union.

To the employees of The Hindu he was a benevolent employer who was calm and unruffled whatever the situation and who created a sense of confidence and loyalty among those who served under him. The staff of The Hindu always found him courteous and soft spoken and he listened to their grievances and representations with patience and sympathy.

In his public activities Narasimhan was essentially a committee man with a personality which his friends said was non-aggressive. His strength of quiet dignity compelled the attention of his colleagues in committee. Member or Chairman, he made his influence felt in every committee and even those who did not agree with him heard him with great respect. He commanded so much faith in his integrity and impartiality that time and again when contentious issues were raised in committee the members would leave it to him to decide. His forte was his knowledge in matters of procedure and he was a stickler for legalistic forms and observances. He was quick to point out discrepancies in legal documents and had a thorough grasp of accounts and figures. He was a good friend and the element of affection was so strong that it divested the relationship of all constrictions and inhibitions. In this he perhaps resembled his famous uncle, Kasturi Srinivasan. Chanchal Sarkar of the Press Institute of India has said that in all matters connected with the work of the Press Institute Narasimhan was always concerned about the personal welfare of the individual, like its Director and his colleagues. When there was discussion of the lowest paid employee in the institute there was always encouragement from him, Sarkar said.

Narasimhan was a great traveller abroad and he made many trips round the world attending conferences and seminars and meetings of professional organisations with which he was so closely connected. "As a traveller, he was very unassuming, very self-contained, never bothering people or asking for assistance or attention", said Sarkar. "He gave no trouble to his host. He was a shy man but he was by no means reserved to those who knew him well. He was receptive to new ideas and his foreign travel broadened his outlook and

enabled him to realise that in this fast changing world if you did not move forward you would be left behind".

Narasimhan was a lover and patron of music. He was the Vice-President of the Music Academy and after *The Hindu* it was his second love. He was a connoisseur of carnatic music and had a collection of recorded tapes of the concerts of all the foremost vidwans which must be the envy of many a devotee of music. He was mechanically minded and loved electronic gadgets and made a collection of them. He was interested in education and was closely associated with the P.S. High School, and the Hindu High School, Madras. Racing was his favourite hobby and he was virtually an encyclopaedia on matters connected with the turf. He was a race-horse owner and was President of the South India Turf Club for some time. A good player in billiards, tennis and golf, he served the Tamil Nadu Billiards Association as its President for a long time.

Narasimhan was a diligent reader of *The Hindu* and closely followed international and national events and made his contribution to the shaping of the policy of his paper. Tributes poured from all over the country into the newsroom of *The Hindu* following news of his death and they reflected the high esteem and affection in which Narasimhan was held by people in every walk of life. R. Venkataraman, a former Minister of Tamil Nadu, who served with him on the first Journalists' Wage Board, said Narasimhan was a perfect gentleman. Soft spoken and firm in his beliefs, he never entered into an argument and this endeared him to one and all. Narasimhan was respected in political and ministerial circles for the way he put forward his ideas. He had a remarkable spirit of accommodation and catholicity of outlook. Another admirer of his said he had a genius for mingling with the high and the low and this quality won him great popularity. There was not a single good cause that suffered for want of his moral and material support.

The family ties with *The Hindu* have been strengthened with the close involvement of the sons of Mr. G. Narasimhan and Mr. G. Kasturi in its conduct and progress towards the beginning of 1977. While N. Ram and N. Ravi, sons of Mr. G. Narasimhan, joined the Editorial Department as Special Assistants to the Editor, their brother N. Murali took over as General Manager. K. Balaji, son of G. Kasturi, entered the Circulation Department.

**T**OWARDS THE MIDDLE of 1975 the country came under an Emergency which resulted in opposition leaders all over the country being imprisoned and a rigorous press censorship was imposed which hit The Hindu as badly as it did other organs of public opinion in other parts of the country. Within the limitations imposed by the Emergency (The Hindu had to scrap an editorial that had been written on the proclamation of the Emergency because the censor forbade writing of editorials on the Emergency) and hampered and circumscribed by the dos and donts of unimaginative and authoritarian censorship, The Hindu continued to play its vital role as a moulder and mouthpiece of public opinion and the supplier of news from all parts of India and the world in as objective and truthful manner as was possible under the censorship rules. It welcomed some aspects of the Emergency such as the vigorous enforcement of discipline in factory, school and government offices and in public life generally, the drive against corruption and smugglers and the greater productive effort in industry where labour displayed a better sense of responsibility and co-operated in ensuring industrial peace. There were areas of government policy which it criticised frankly and without inhibition and among the subjects which came under its scrutiny were population policy, urban land ceiling bill, gaps in economic policy, planning and press ordinances. The Hindu was ignorant (as it was to confess later) of the "gross excesses of the family planning drive in the Hindi-speaking states and other acts of repression", because of press censorship and when the lid burst open after the rout of the Congress in the north in the Parliamentary elections and grim and poignant disclosures were made during the enquiry into Emergency excesses by various commissions, it took cudgels against Mrs. Indira Gandhi for her "authoritarian and repressive regime" during 18 months of Emergency. But The Hindu was not happy with the "ruling Conglomeration" as it called the Janata Party which was swept to power in the Centre in March, 1977 when almost its first political act was to dismiss the Congress governments in the northern states and order fresh elections. The Hindu thought it was "certainly not a good beginning for the Janata Government professedly pledged to rooting out authoritarianism and attempts at one party rule in the country".

The deteriorating labour-management relations and the spate of strikes and lock-outs caused concern to The Hindu which wrote: "There is an air of

unrealism — or should we say insensitivity? — in the attitude of the Government at the Centre towards the deterioration in labour-management relations in the past few weeks". The Hindu was much more disturbed by the Janata Government's ideas on economic policy which, it said, were an "attempt to reject the very path of development India has taken since Independence". When the Janata Government completed six months in office in October, 1977, The Hindu expressed dissatisfaction with its failure to rise to the people's hopes after the "trouncing of the authoritarian regime" which appeared to signify the "beginning of a new era".

When Mrs Gandhi refused to testify before the Shah Commission (set up by the Janata Government to enquire into Emergency excesses) and cast aspersions on it, The Hindu sharply criticised her for the "demagogic and intemperate attack on the credentials, motivations, basic conduct and modalities of the Shah Commission".

As the Janata Government announced its industrial policy in December, 1977, The Hindu remarked its "most agreeable feature is that it has made a bold attempt to give the quietus to the fears that the Janata party was backward in its approach to the economic development of the country".

The most important political event in the beginning of 1978 was the third split in the Congress caused by Mrs Gandhi and her followers. The Hindu's comment on it was "The outlook of Mrs Gandhi and her henchmen who have captured an unknown part of the Congress Party organisation is blatant. It is to prey upon the complex and uncertain developing situation of the present in order to develop muscle for what bids fair to be the command centre of disruption in the country".

The elections to the State Assemblies towards the end of February, 1978, in which the Indira Congress scored impressive majorities in the southern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh led The Hindu to conclude that the "impression that the country has been politically divided into a Janata-dominated North and predominantly Congress-ridden South, with entirely different patterns emerging in some other regions, has been strengthened".

We may end this summing up of what The Hindu thought and said during and after the Emergency with its own words. "In the new year (1978), the single most important characteristic of the political situation is the instability and uncertainty in relation to basic questions that have been brought into sharp relief by the third major split of the Indian National Congress in its 92-year old history. Both Congressmen and Janataites have been given much food for thought. The way they act and decide issues in the coming months will be closely watched by the people".

What follow are detailed exposition of The Hindu's views and reactions to events during and after the Emergency which carry us almost to the middle of 1978.

The Hindu was impressed by the drive to improve discipline and efficiency which marked the declaration of Emergency in June 1975 and wanted an all-out attack on corruption. It wrote in July: "All round official corruption seems to have flourished under an umbrella of permissiveness. The public will expect that the present drive to improve discipline and efficiency in public offices will be followed or rather accompanied by all-out action to root out corruption too, for they are often interlinked". The Hindu pointed out that



"adulteration of food has been flourishing as an organised industry in processing centres in many parts of India including Tamil Nadu. Those are serious crimes that pose a grave threat to the life and health of the people. Unrelenting efforts must be made to locate the dens of cynical profiteering and to punish the men behind them. The shake-up now attempted has indeed a wide field to cover and the special powers conferred on the government by the Emergency, if wisely used, may yet make a worthwhile impact on the problem in all its facets"

In December, 1975, *The Hindu* called for a flexible food policy to meet the situation caused by a rich harvest and abundance of food. "Does the policy-makers' mind conditioned by the uncertain harvests and persistent scarcity of foodgrains in the past", it asked, "find it hard to react with speed and flexibility to the new abundance of this year? So it would seem judging by the farmers' cries of distress in the surplus states over the very sharp fall in prices of grains, while prices rule fairly high in many deficit pockets. By all accounts there has been a record kharif harvest of not only rice but of coarse grains too, not to speak of oilseeds and most other commercial crops. In fact the demand has come from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka for an all-India policy on price protection through support operations. What are the policy-makers still waiting for? With the storage bins of the Government agencies full with both imported as well as locally procured grains and with the announced intention of maintaining food imports this year also at fairly high levels, there appears little warrant for excessive caution in initiating flexible policy changes to meet the new situation".

*The Hindu* said: "There are weighty reasons for the Government relaxing considerably both inter-district and zonal movement controls even if they cannot be dismantled in their entirety. This will not only even out the prices all over the country but ease the task of the Government in finding all of the huge money needed for extensive market support operations".

*The Hindu* again stressed towards the end of December, 1975 that if the hopes raised by the overall increases in output in every field of production had to be realised "a lot more effort will be required to keep the economic machine in fine fettle. So much is said about the increased availability of all goods and particularly of coarse and fine cereals. Yet there can be no denying the existence of a sense of fear about this availability turning out to be too large to be comfortable. The fear is aggravated by the patent reluctance, for whatever reason, of the Government to do what it should to convert the larger availability into a blessing from the bane it portends to be. For instance the Government's unwillingness to remove distributional and other controls on food and thereby pave the way for facilitating the achievement of an equilibrium of demand and supply via the open market can only foster the proliferation of pockets of plenty and scarcity. That itself will prevent the enjoyment of the advantages flowing from bumper crops in their select areas of production and in the country at large. Similarly, the absence of an effective programme for the disposal of accumulated stocks of textiles or any other item of production will only act as a damper on new production.... From all available data the Government's policy is yet to be vigorously oriented towards encouraging appropriate increases in the volume of savings and investments besides assuring a monetary fiscal climate that is congenial to the profitability of enterprises.

All this will call for a shedding of the conventional fears about deficit spending. Productionwise the economy has definitely emerged out of the shaky situation which had cribbed and confined the fifth plan programmes. It remains for the Government to launch a bold effort reshaping the plan and endowing it with the added muscle and fibre which it will require for living up to the hopes 1975 has raised".

A year later (December 1976) The Hindu drew attention to the stagnation in the economy and said deficiency on the distribution side was mainly responsible. "It is time that the Central Government acted more decisively", it wrote, "on the basis of its growing awareness that the success of its policy on production and prices depends heavily on how what is produced is allowed to be distributed. Achievement of higher industrial growth rates alone is not enough for increases in production in many cases meant adding more to stocks than to sales and the per capita consumption of essential commodities and semi-luxuries has not improved or as warranted even by such limited expansion in incomes and spending power as has taken place. That it is the deficiency on the distribution side which has been the main causative factor should be evident from the manner in which the liberalisation of movement curbs by Gujarat has brought groundnut oil prices significantly down in the neighbouring Maharashtra... The malaise of the present is stagnation. Controls have helped to convert it into stagnation or sectoral inflation with stagnation, representing more a money choke than a money burst as academics will have it".

The Hindu had noted two months earlier (October, 1976) that there had been no general qualitative improvement in one core aspect of industry—productivity. "The discipline prevalent in the atmosphere of the Emergency", it said, "obviously was responsible by and large for the remarkable halving of mandays lost in industrial disputes in 1975 from the record level of 1974. There is also a noticeable increase in production in industry in the first half of this year with larger availability of raw materials and power. All this is to the good. Notwithstanding the general increase in the quantity and value of production after years of stunted growth there is still no firm evidence of a general qualitative improvement in one core aspect of industry — productivity. The experience for example in coal and steel goes to show that a mere increase in output however laudable cannot bring down prices. The need is simultaneously to reduce the unit cost which has gone up in many companies according to the Reserve Bank of India, or keep the rate of increase in it down to the minimum".

The Hindu said: "Despite the level of wages being low compared to international standards, Indian industry finds that its costs of production are higher than they need be. The reason for this is clear enough—low productivity. The various administrative instruments brought into existence since Emergency—including the National Apex Body—should now be directed to pay attention to productivity improvement, the main economic criterion for increased normal wages or special payments. There has not yet been a keen and widespread national appreciation of this factor which is an essential prerequisite not only to combat inflation at home but also to compete for sales abroad... If industries are to grow with sufficient muscle to promote

domestic consumption and face foreign competition in exports they have to generate surpluses on a large scale all by themselves. And this cannot be achieved without an all-round and substantial improvement in productivity".

The Hindu came to believe even before the Emergency that the population explosion must be tackled on a war footing and a measure of compulsion was unavoidable. It supported coercive steps proposed by the Maharashtra Government through legislation for birth control and it pleaded that the Centre should adopt a policy for all India combining coercion and incentives. It noted (in January, 1976) that "while the states are free to take any disciplinary measure to intensify family planning, the Centre is disinclined to plumb for statutory compulsion to achieve the objectives of 30 births per thousand before the end of the decade . . . If after two decades of supposedly intensive family planning drive by persuasion only 16 per cent of the 102 million couples in the reproductive age are covered by one or other form of contraception, some form of coercion suggests itself as the way to solve the problem. Even states which have been forward in family planning have been computed to have protected only 23 per cent of the couples from child bearing. The laggard states do not seem to have taken energetic steps to cover lost ground . . . The disciplinary steps that some states contemplate are not unrealistic at all. For instance, Punjab has proposed restrictions on maternity leave for women and denial of loans for purchase of scooters or houses to couples with three or more children. Such drastic measures in one or two states may help create the climate to receive compulsion without demur in other areas and ultimately pave the way for action in other states which are hesitant . . . Till such time as the Centre makes its own move the states which have been dragging their feet would do well to bestir themselves towards achieving better results than they have been able to show so far. One lesson that has been learnt both by the Centre and state Governments is that compulsion cannot be avoided to contain the baby boom. That is itself a step forward".

When the Maharashtra Government introduced a bill in the legislature in April, 1976, to make sterilisation compulsory for those with more than a specified number of children, The Hindu wrote: "The bill might appear drastic to some, but the population problem has become so serious that it calls for far more effective action than any taken so far". The Hindu said: "There is not a single poor couple which can give a fair chance to each of its many children but yet it makes the task of eradication of poverty in the country impossible by raising too large a family".

"Maharashtra", it continued, "which has always been in the forefront in carrying on the family planning drive has done well to take the initiative to introduce a bill to make sterilisation, under certain circumstances compulsory, with severe penalties provided for non-compliance". The Hindu said the "operation of an element of compulsion over a period will also have its own educative value on the masses" but it pleaded for a uniform law for the whole country cutting across caste, creed and community.

A national population policy was announced by the Government of India on April 16, 1976. The Hindu said it reflected the urgency and magnitude of the problems to be tackled and was "fairly comprehensive. If anything it seems to err on the side of moderation, in an attempt to be realistic and not push the pace too hard too soon". The Hindu thought the target of reduction in the

birthrate "from 35 per thousand of the population at present to 25 per thousand by 1984" resulting in the rate of growth declining from 2 per cent to 1.4 per cent was too low. "This is surely a far cry from the zero growth rate that is deemed necessary for a country already loaded with 600 million people", The Hindu said. "The fall in the birth rate has to be much steeper than what is aimed at to avert a serious crisis in the near future. But the cautious approach of the Centre has obviously taken into account the complexities of the issues involved and the difficulties of reaching the minds and hearts of the masses, steeped in ignorance, tradition and prejudice". The paper noted that while the Centre was not in favour of all India legislation for compulsory sterilisation, it was not "averse to the state governments going ahead with the steps they have already initiated in that regard". "Purposeful execution of even the limited central policy during the next decade", it said, "should however pave the way for more effective and drastic measures later if necessary. But it may also be hoped that the spread of the family planning message would be so wide and deep by then that there would be no need to resort to compulsion."

A piece of legislation of the Central Government which The Hindu vigorously opposed was the Urban Land Ceiling Bill which was introduced in Parliament in the last week of January, 1976. The bill would come as a bombshell to many, it said, "because of the actual provisions of the legislation now made known, their rather drastic and expropriatory nature and the far-reaching and adverse impact they will have on many citizens and on orderly town planning and urban development as a whole". The bill was introduced to fix a ceiling on ownership of land in urban areas and for acquisition of surplus land by the Government.

The Hindu said no one would dispute the need to reduce concentration of urban land in a few hands and to curb speculation in real estate but the means sought to be adopted "are both harsh and unwise". It said the same objective could be realised "in a more orderly and less painful manner by adjusting the wealth tax-rate and imposing a graded tax on larger urban land ownership, sufficiently heavy to induce the shedding of excess fat by sale, gift or other admitted means. A little reflection would reveal that in choosing instead to fix a statutory low limit to such land holding, the Government will be letting loose a host of unintended consequences of vital economic significance too". The Hindu said by giving "retrospective effect to some of the provisions the hardship and confusion is aggravated manifold. The Government which waited so long because of the complexities of the issues involved in this kind of arbitrary procrustean truncation of housing sites could have opted for a detailed on-the-spot investigation by a competent expert team in all the principal urban conglomeration in the country before venturing on so drastic a step".

The Hindu appealed to the Government to consider "how much it stands to lose by way of wealth tax and capital gains tax and the states by way of stamp duty and registration fees by the contemplated virtual expropriation... The proposed ceiling bill bristles with so many anomalies and disruptive provisions that Government would be very ill-advised to rush through with the legislation".

During the Emergency two ordinances were issued which affected the Press. One of them, which came into effect on June 25, 1975, was the

prevent the publication of "objectionable matter" The Hindu wrote. "Wide as is the enumeration of what constitutes 'objectionable matter' under the ordinance, this special law is superfluous under conditions of Emergency which has armed the Executive with even more sweeping powers. The urgency for the ordinance is not clear, unless it be that the Government wants to provide an opportunity to the public to assess the provisions and offer useful criticism before it comes up for consideration before Parliament as it has to in the near future". "It is obvious", The Hindu said, "that what is sought to be prevented by the ordinance like promotion of class or communal hatred and disharmony, preaching of hatred and disaffection against the Government, inciting the public to violence or seducing the members of the armed forces or those of law and order, certainly deserves to be prevented and to a great extent has been prevented under the ordinary fairly comprehensive laws of the land. What particularly differentiates the ordinance from the earlier law is the resort to such an extraordinary punitive provision as the demand for security of 'an amount' (which could be so heavy as totally to cripple a newspaper and force its closure). The procedure for notifying an allegedly errant journal or printing press and the seizure of copies containing 'objectionable matter' are also summary in nature. . . While there are undoubtedly a few sensation-mongering papers and yellow journals resorting to unethical reporting, character assassination and communal incitement and so have to be dealt with strictly, the ordinance can have the unintended effect of enveloping the entire press in an ever-present cloud of fear and hamper their sound functioning. The ends of Press reform can easily be met by drawing up a healthy code of conduct for all print media and making it part of Article 19(1)-a so that 'freedom of speech and expression' may at no time mean freedom to cross the bounds of decorum or endanger long-term public interest".

The second ordinance which was issued at the same time was called the "Parliamentary Proceedings (Protection of publication) Repeal Ordinance. It withdrew the immunity against civil or criminal action in regard to publication in the Press of reports of Parliamentary proceedings. It might appear to impose a handicap on newspapers, The Hindu said, "but the truth is that it is a reluctant Press that had so far to report slanderous attacks on publicmen made sometimes by legislators within the privileged precincts of the house, lest it should be charged with suppressing them from the public. The more responsible sections of the Press have always been careful to minimise publicity for mudslinging bouts within Parliament and the legislatures and to them at any rate the repeal of the 1956 Act will make little difference. In fact it enables them to screen Parliament proceedings even more closely from the viewpoint of their violation of the ordinary laws of libel and defamation and also codes of decency. They may still choose to publish certain hazardous reports of the proceedings of the house if they feel it is in the public interest to do so and then face the consequences. It is only some members of the legislatures that have failed to prevent 'misuse' of the immunity, especially by the sensationalist sections of the Press, by providing the grist for their mill in the form of unrestrained speech within the house. To the extent such slanderous speeches were made with an eye to wider publicity it is such legislators that may feel deprived and not the better conducted newspapers. It is in fact a wholesome principle that journalists and journalism should come under the

same safeguards. And there is no reason why they should not respect the laws of libel, defamation and slander as scrupulously as any citizen nor be afraid to brave them when they feel convinced that public interest demands it".

A year later after the emergence of the Janata Government at the Centre and in many of the states, The Hindu postulated three basic principles to make Press freedom real. One of them pertained to the conduct of the Press itself "If it does not keep its own house clean and exercise reasonable restraint in its functioning" it wrote (on December 29, 1977), "the consequences could be unpleasant. Freedom should not be allowed to degenerate into licence which would open the door to Government interference. Some of the official restraints imposed on the Press in the past have flowed from abuse of freedom by a few sections of the Press though it must also be said that the Government has often in the past used such behaviour as an unwarranted excuse to put its foot down on the Press. A Press Council voluntarily set up by the Press would have been the correct thing to do for that would have meant prior commitment to accept the council's recommendations but the Janata Government has chosen to make the new council a statutory body like the old council".

The Hindu said a second imperative for Press freedom "is the response of Authority. A newspaper cannot feel free just by being given the freedom to write anything it wants as long as it is subjected to physical restraints which curb its overall ability to function smoothly — in particular its ability to work economically, reach as wide a readership as it would wish and take full advantage of the technological advances made in the field elsewhere in the world to develop itself adequately. The Prime Minister has stressed that the Press could be free only if it did not depend on Government support. Very true. But the Indian Press, even that part of it which can go without Government's financial support has still to keep knocking at its door with asinine persistence for its physical requirements such as plant and machinery and newsprint, most of which have to be imported. The freedom to import from whichever part of the world is deemed necessary by the newspaper is more significant to the Press than is normally recognised. And in the case of those newspapers and other journals whose finances are not secure and which therefore depend heavily on official advertising, the dependence on Government is near total. It is no news to say that the previous Government used this stick freely to influence or control them. Precisely how the Janata Government is going to reverse this feature remains in the realm of conjecture . . . Nor is it enough if the Prime Minister and the Information and Broadcasting Minister alone were to make a firm commitment towards a free Press. Should not the Centre get all the states to support in theory and practice such a commitment?"

The Hindu said: "The third and perhaps the most important factor involved in the maintenance of Press freedom is the attitude of society as a whole which besides the public includes politicians, trade unions, advertisers etc. The Press has been subject to pressure from one or another of these sources and the less viable among the Press have found it difficult to withstand this. . . . Press freedom can come to prevail only when all sections of the body politic resolve to make it prevail by removing all impediments in the way".

On January 20, 1977, the President, on the advice of the Prime Minister, dissolved Parliament and ordered elections to be held in March. The opposition leaders were released, Emergency restrictions were relaxed and press censorship was also relaxed.

The Hindu said the holding of an early poll "implies that the then rampant activity of the disruptive forces that precluded the exposure of the people to the rough and tumble of electoral forays is sufficiently under control now. The people, too, have been able to realise during the past 18 months or so what disciplined and orderly public life can mean to their progress and well-being". The Hindu added. "Since it is the opposition parties that were clamouring for elections, they ought to be pleased with Tuesday's announcement. They have now another chance — each on its own or jointly — to muster enough public support to displace the Congress from power. They tried this in the past and failed. And such failure unfortunately led to short-circuiting Parliamentary Democracy by agitational politics of the streets. They are supposed to have realised to some extent the errors of their ways. Whether they have a viable alternative to offer to the electorate by way of sound programmes and policies or unity of purpose is quite another matter".

As four opposition parties including the Jana Sangh, the Congress (O), the B L D. (Bharatiya Lok Dal) and the Socialists combined and announced the formation of a Janata party to fight the elections under a common leadership and election symbol, the political scene was electrified in February 1977, by the resignation of Jagjivan Ram, Agriculture Minister, from the Cabinet and the Congress Party and his subsequent formation of a new party, the Congress for Democracy. The Hindu said: "Mr. Jagjivan Ram would like the people believe that his defection from the party of which he had been a leading light for so long, is different and that it is the 'authoritarian trends' in the Congress under Mrs. Gandhi that has driven him to take the kind of action that he has now taken. It would be less difficult to believe that thesis if Mr. Jagjivan Ram had resigned or at least openly protested against these trends much earlier. Instead he had been privy to everything that he now denounces so loudly. It may be argued that he waited for the opportune moment, after the Lok Sabha had been irrevocably dissolved by the President and elections had been announced, to come out openly with his denunciation of the Government's policies. Even this charitable construction is undermined by the fact that he failed to resign or protest soon after the dissolution of the Lok Sabha but waited till the time when the list of Congress candidates to contest the elections was being taken up. It would be interesting to know if he had voiced his dissent and disapproval at appropriate Cabinet and party meetings of those executive actions and pieces of legislation which he condemns today in such strong terms".

Writing on the eve of the elections, The Hindu stressed the paramount need to ensure stability at the Centre. It said the elections to the Lok Sabha were crucial "because the outcome will determine whether India, which has survived many threats to its very existence and emerged as a strong nation and is well set to progress on pragmatic lines, will continue to go forward or become a prey to instability, centrifugal and chauvinistic pulls, amateurish economic experimentation and a playground for outside interference".

"India's long history," The Hindu wrote, "as well as its present situation make one thing unmistakably clear that this country, whether under the Mauryas, the Moghuls, the British or under the Congress since Independence, remains strong, united, stable and purposeful in the implementation of worthwhile programmes and is able to stand up to a hostile world only if and when

there is a stoutly-led Government at the Centre. Once this paramount need is well recognised all other considerations become subordinate to it and the choice the voter has to make becomes easier".

Noting that the elections would be virtually a contest between the Congress and its supporters on the one hand and the Janata Party and its allies on the other, The Hindu drew attention to the fact that the constituent parties of the Janata remained undissolved and their merger "is but a promise for the future". The Hindu asked: "How can the people not recall to their mind the number of attempts made during the past seven years to forge a single party out of these heterogeneous groups that had failed every time because none of them was prepared to lose its separate identity? Nor can it be forgotten how the electoral debacle of the Grand Alliance in 1971 actually let loose the most bitter accusations, each constituent blaming the others for the convincing rejection of the alliance by the people. That such parties have been able to come together appears to be not a firmer indication towards a merger but only a measure of their common urge to pull the Congress down whatever the cost"

The Hindu said: "A political party is born out of a few people's fervent faith in an ideology or programme and then it grows with more and more people coming to believe in its plank and joining it. But what is one to make of the four Janata constituents with their different roots, policies and outlook trying to form a new party and inventing a programme for it, on the basis of sops thrown in to placate each disparate group and broadcasting it as a viable one though bristling with contradictions?" The Hindu thought that "apart from the Janata party's manifesto being a breezily fabricated one, not only is its economic programme not workable but its overall approach is not calculated to keep the party together after the elections". The Hindu recognised there were "many well-tried leaders" among the constituents of the Janata Party "but they have to sink their egos and separate ambitions and bring about a well-knit national party before they can expect either to play the role of a purposeful opposition in Parliament or to inherit power from the Congress. And that is a tall order at present"

The Hindu admitted that while the good record in the economic sphere and all-round improvement in foreign relations of the Congress were there for all to see, the party "has also committed quite a few mistakes. But in economic matters they are honest errors of judgment, being constantly rectified. The new discipline in national life — in industry, schools and colleges — and the routing of the anti-social elements, the smugglers, the black money racketeers are notable gains that cannot be minimised by even those unalterably opposed to the Congress". In a reference to the Emergency The Hindu said: "The mass arrests and the erosion of civil liberties in the wake of the Emergency obviously constitute a feature of political life that none can be happy about, including those who authorised them. But was not the genesis of this sad state of affairs provided by the threat of chaos and anarchy posed by Mr J. P. Narayan and the Janata constituents first in Gujarat, then in Bihar and later gravitating to the capital itself? . . . The Emergency and the resultant suspension of freedoms have to be seen along with what provoked it and what the common people and the country as a whole have gained from it. The conditions now ensured for the elections, like the virtual suspension of the Emergency, appear free and fair



enough for them to go on and produce results. Anyway, in a fit of anger, even if justified, against some of the wrongs of the Emergency, can we afford to throw the baby with the bathwater?"

The March elections to the Lok Sabha resulted in the rout of the Congress in the north where it was not able to get even a single seat and the return of the Janata party and its allies with a two-thirds majority. In the southern states however the Janata suffered the same fate which the Congress did in the North, the latter and its allies virtually annexing all the seats except for three or four in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

The Hindu pointed out that the "same people who massively voted Mrs. Gandhi and her party to power with a two-thirds majority in 1971 have thought it necessary now with an equal sense of purpose, to deny her even a seat in the Lok Sabha (Mrs. Gandhi was defeated in her Rae Bareilly constituency of Uttar Pradesh). It is also to be noted that the voters who discounted the Grand Alliance's slogan of 'Democracy in danger' in 1971 have this time heeded the same slogan when raised by the Janata Party, a reincarnation of the same alliance under a new name. Evidently they had reasons to believe that this time the cry had a lot more of substance. Nevertheless, the impressive and unmistakable success of Mrs. Gandhi's Congress in the southern states which were exposed to the same Emergency restrictions and the same Janata wave as were the more populous (and so decisive) northern states may also help isolate the factor or factors that have pushed the Congress down notwithstanding the perceptible benefits derived by the weaker sections from the implementation of some of the schemes of the P. M.'s 20-point programme. It is a pity that the era of press censorship had kept the south (and the higher authorities themselves to an extent) ignorant of the gross excesses of the family planning drive in the Hindi-speaking states and other acts of repression. . . It is the hurried and immature attempts in the northern states to make up for lost time by the use of indiscriminate strong arm methods for mass compulsory sterilisation that are said to have so roused popular anger in the north against Mrs. Gandhi whether or not she herself had had a hand in the misdeeds. If this is indeed the crucial factor that has so clearly differentiated the verdict of the southern and northern states in the present poll, it is all the same unfortunate that there should occur such a regionwise conflict in preferences. For what becomes very relevant and significant is its possible impact on the unity of approach to national problems so necessary. With the Janata party so sparsely represented in the Lok Sabha from the four enlightened southern states, their involvement in the business of the Central Government is bound to suffer from the lack of adequate representation. It is, however, to be hoped that men of vision and statesmanship will take due cognisance of this new developing situation to ensure that the interests of the South would not go by default as a consequence of an entirely unexpected turn of events".

The Hindu said the unprecedented heavy polling in the elections was evidence of the "awareness and alertness of the Indian electorate" and added it served as a "warning to any ruling party that it cannot take the people for granted and that even good intentions (as in the F.P. programme) cannot make up for bad implementation. A great deal depends on whether the Janata party is going to fulfil its pre-election promise to effect *de jure* merger of the constituent parties soon after the elections. When it does it would have taken

the first step towards dispelling genuinely entertained fears of instability at the Centre. . . . Whatever the shape of things to come, the orderly and peaceful elections just completed successfully in the world's largest Democracy deserve to be followed by a sober acceptance of the verdict by both the victors and the vanquished".

Soon after the Janata party took over the reins of office at the Centre with Morarji Desai as Prime Minister, the Home Minister, Charan Singh, issued an ultimatum to the Congress Governments in the northern states to resign or be dismissed since the electorate had expressed its lack of confidence in them by routing the Congress in the Lok Sabha elections. The Hindu thought this was "certainly not a good beginning for the Janata Government professedly pledged to rooting out authoritarianism and attempts at one-party rule in the country". "We say this more in sorrow", it added, "than anger for much is expected of a Government led by Mr. Morarji Desai and more has been promised by the new rulers in their election manifesto and campaign". The Hindu asked if the Janata Government "takes recourse to this apparently abhorrent device to topple or dismiss at one stroke a large number of duly elected state Governments, will not the people wonder whether it is not after all the same mixture as before? Mr. Charan Singh's argument about there being a simultaneous constitutional breakdown in nine states does take one's breath away. The Janata Government has been in the saddle for too short a time to be able to claim that it has accumulated all the facts to warrant the conclusion that the administration has broken down or is steeped in corruption in any one state — still less to do so in as many as nine states. One does not need the power of divination to see that this fig leaf of an argument only conceals (or fails to conceal) the desire of the Janata party to get a candidate of its choice elected in the forthcoming Presidential elections. It is obvious that with the Congress in the majority in so many state legislatures and in the Rajya Sabha, a Janata Presidential candidate just does not have the ghost of a chance unless the voting cuts across party lines. . . . Well-wishers of the new Government at the Centre, will still hope that it will give up its ill-advised move to follow up the inevitable rejection of its 'advice' to the nine states Chief Ministers to resign and get their respective Assemblies dissolved or else —. After all there are but a few months to go for these state elections".

The Janata Government went ahead with its plan and in May, 1977, ordered the dismissal of the nine Congress State Governments and the holding of elections "without even the formality of a Governor's report to justify resort to Article 356 of the Constitution", as The Hindu remarked. "Though seven of the nine dissolved Assemblies are due to face elections in less than a year, the Janata leaders are evidently aware of the mood not lasting that long or not maintaining the same intensity particularly if the economic situation becomes one in which fulfilling election promises becomes a difficult task".

The Hindu warned. "With this bad precedent set, successive Governments at the Centre, once elected with a crushing majority, can and may choose to dismiss any or every State Government being run by a different party. The contention that the present situation created by the rout of the Congress in those states in the Lok Sabha elections is unique and hence provides the justification for the action and that no precedent bad or good has been set thereby, would not cut much ice with a future Central Government that may choose to take full advantage of it. It may not be difficult for that Government

to project the sophistry that is all that seems to be necessary to justify such acts. It looks as if all is deemed fair not only in love and war but in elections and politics too."

When Charan Singh's "political gamble", as *The Hindu* called it, paid off in June, 1977 and the Janata Party romped home victorious in seven of the nine states which went to the polls, the paper wrote "Call it a Janata wave or an anti-Congress one, its persistence in strength in the northern states is being amply confirmed by the decisive results of the state Assembly elections pouring in. What seemed a political gamble of the Union Home Minister, Mr. Charan Singh, in getting nine state Governments summarily dismissed and ordering a fresh poll, has certainly paid off"

Referring to the Congress debacle in the elections, *The Hindu* said "Its own sins and internal weaknesses apart, the spate of disclosures of Emergency excesses and enquiries into them should have managed to keep alive and even intensify well-justified public anger against it. The party may, in fact, feel relieved that though routed it could gain a few seats in those states where it has been totally obliterated in the Lok Sabha poll. With the Janata party at the Centre yet to give an earnest of its capabilities on the economic front, it is to be presumed that this second vote of the people's confidence it has won is also another firm rejection of the Congress. The people obviously feel that this once great party has yet to learn the lessons of the recent past. It may also be that now that a viable national alternative to the Congress has at last become available, the people want to give it a fair chance to prove its worth both at the national and state levels"

The question which *The Hindu* had been asking — will the various constituents of the Janata party sink their egos and emerge as one single party? — was answered in the middle of June, 1977 when the various constituents of the Janata party including Jagjivan Ram's Congress for Democracy merged and became one party. *The Hindu* described it as a "wholesome development". "The cohesiveness of the ruling party at the Centre", it said, "is indispensable if we are to have a stable Government that can deal effectively with the numerous problems of this vast country of 630 million people and can also face up to the many pressures from within and without. Even as the different parties dissolved themselves and subscribed to unconditional union under one flag it is good that their spokesmen have not minimised the hurdles ahead in achieving cohesiveness and a common sense of purpose and discipline. Compromises will have to be continually made on most major policy issues".

The hurdles ahead of the Janata Government mentioned by *The Hindu* became evident when the party struggled to frame its economic policy. "The voice of economic romanticism", *The Hindu* wrote (in August, 1977), "is clearly identifiable amidst the differences at the top level of the ruling party over the basic structure of economic policy". *The Hindu* said what stood out was an "attempt to reject the very path of development India has taken since Independence as being incapable of solving the problems of unemployment, mass poverty and low growth rates. While few students of political economy would be inclined to contest the bluntly presented conviction that India's overall performance has not been good enough and that the whole development effort is caught in a rut, it is the nature of the alternative strategy discussed vaguely that must cause concern. The key incantation so far as the

Janata is concerned is decentralisation of economic and political power — initially promised in the party's election manifesto. At one extreme in the Janata spectrum of views is the concept of decentralisation that is to be translated into practice by recognising the primacy of agriculture over industry, by changing the balance of allocation of development resources radically in favour of agriculture and at the expense of heavy industry, by reserving industrial production now in the domain of large scale machine, or factory industry, to the decentralised sector, that is, to cottage and small scale industries and by allowing big industries to exist on pain of export. Such a development alternative must be characterised as pre-modern and even backward looking not merely because it sees the advance of large-scale industry as a curse, not merely because it confuses the overriding centralisation and concentration inherent in the historical evolution of India's modern industrial structure with its bigness (which is of course, a relative concept) and not merely because it refuses to see in modern industry man's great achievements in science, technology, and production. From the standpoint of the people it might appear as a prescription for the continued poverty of India, a blueprint to keep India away from the mainstream of world-wide advances in modern production. It is very much in line with familiar homilies showered on us by certain Western circles some years ago to the effect that a country like India does not need a basis of its own for heavy industry — but can rely on more developed economies to meet its development needs. The line that a large part of India's factory industry must live by exports alone would place the industry and the workers employed at the mercy of international market forces and therefore in an increasingly helpless position. The implication that production for the home market can develop at a primitive technical and organisational level while production for export alone must be efficient and competitive is to turn national development priorities topsy-turvy, is therefore clearly unacceptable to the people."

The Hindu pointed out that the ruination of India's cottage and handicraft industries was a pre-industrial phenomenon "brought on by the savage thrust of British colonialism in an earlier phase and the process attained a new force in the second half of the 19th century and a new intensity since the end of the first world war. Today the tenacity of small scale production in India is an expression not of its innate viability, but of the incompleteness, on account of basic structural reason, of the industrialisation process itself . . . Protection to the traditional industrial sector against ruinous competition from large-scale industry, encouragement of methods involving the greater employment of labour and abjuration of modern methods in the production of certain specified non-essential commodities are welcome short-term and transitional measures which will not, however, confer on the 'decentralised' sector the boon of happy existence. And this applies as much to agriculture — where Mr. Charan Singh's pet strategy for the development of an agrarian structure based on a free wheeling and highly individualistic peasant proprietorship is being discussed — as to the field of industry in which according to the latest resolution of the Janata party, "what can be produced by cottage industry shall not be produced by the small scale sector and what can be produced by the small scale sector shall not be open for large scale industry".

"The effort to get out of the rut of a particular type of planning now threatens to degenerate into an exercise that bears no relevance to the development needs of a poor country such as India," The Hindu said. "A correct relation is yet to be established between industry and agriculture and among different sectors of industry and the contraposing of agriculture (which must undoubtedly be the foundation of India's national economy for a long time to come) with industry (which has already become the leading factor) is unwarranted and most disturbing. At a time when the country urgently needs a new planning vision based on alertness to world-wide developments in science and production and on an undogmatic evaluation of resources at the grass roots, the debate on economic policy within the ruling party has ceased to be edifying — since it seems to beg the question of mobilisation of resources for planning"

In another editorial a month later (October, 1977), The Hindu warned that "when the Janata Government comes to grips with the practical problems of managing the economy, it will be clear that the objectives are numerous and sole allegiance to anyone may lead to troubles elsewhere. From the various ministerial pronouncements on economic policy one finds for instance that the Government wants to remove poverty, end unemployment, step up exports, keep down or even reduce prices and, of course, speed up growth. In the face of these aims blind preference for labour intensive technology or for cottage industries will not do. Nor can one be dogmatic on such issues as agriculture or industry, small versus large industry and public versus private sectors. In most cases it is not a plain either/or choice but only a question of emphasis, of securing the right mix. In sorting out the priorities, short term goals should not predominate and policies that will stand the economy in good stead in the long run should be preferred. Mechanisation may not look attractive to some people from the point of view of immediate benefit that should accrue to the poor but can there be any doubt about its contribution to the firming of the economy's base? There should be no turning back on modernisation, which holds the key to development".

Solicitude for the vast rural population "must be matched by practical measures to pull them out of the rut, not by resort to methods of production known to be antiquated and inefficient", The Hindu wrote on another occasion. "That will only perpetuate the state of subsistence living of the villagers. The right way to help them is to take science and technology to their doorsteps and introduce them to modern methods of production. Again in the case of small industries efficient technology must be adopted so that productivity and incomes of the workers can be raised. Marketability can be ensured only by maintaining good quality and keeping costs low. All this calls for detailed studies to identify industries with good potential and drawing up of specific schemes which must precede any major reallocation in favour of agriculture or small industry".

When the Janata party formulated its economic policy in November, 1977, The Hindu said a redeeming feature of the economic blue print was the "staying away from the extreme positions taken by some of its leading lights" "No one, of course," it said, "could have expected the policy-makers completely to get over their obsession with agriculture, cottage and small industries, and Gandhian self-discipline. But the debate and the criticism since the

time the party assumed office have had some impact, however inadequate, on their thinking. Thus the preference for small industry is qualified by the condition that it should "reasonably be efficient". The imperative of transferring manpower from agriculture to industry and services in the process of development is recognised though it is dismissed as being part of the long-term strategy". The Hindu said the stamp of "primitivism is discernible in parts at least of the note. It does not quite come to grips with the task of establishing a proper relationship between agriculture and manufacturing sectors and between large and small industry". The Hindu pointed out the better way to promote small industry (instead of reservation of areas and freezing of capacity of large units) "is to infuse modern technology into them and help in the marketing of their products, and strangely enough, on those very pertinent matters, the document remains largely silent". The Hindu added, "It remains to be seen if the Janata Government will arrive at the right policy mix that will help the economy modernise and develop rapidly. The party's economic blueprint can certainly do with a lot of updating".

When the Janata Government's industrial policy was announced in December, 1977, The Hindu said its "most agreeable feature is that it has made a bold attempt to give the quietus to the fears that the Janata party was backward in its approach to the economic development of the country. Its leaders had from time to time given expression to unthinking prejudices against large scale industry, modernisation and mechanisation and to an obsessive attachment to the small scale as well as the tiny sector of industry. The statement reflects a welcome response to the unambiguous criticisms, levelled against taking such stances without regard to the consequences. The policy now recognises the crucial role of basic industries as the main prop of industrial activity; of higher technology industries such as fertilisers, pesticide and petrochemicals as denoting specific capabilities which other units of whatever scale of operation cannot hope to acquire; and of large scale industries like machine tools, organic and inorganic chemicals which can be managed only by entrepreneurs in the big sector". The Hindu was also happy that the importance of the public sector had been stressed. It also pointed out a lacuna in the Government thinking. "What will the Government do", it asked, "if production capacity in certain lines lying with large scale units is to be frozen for the convenience of small producers and the latter do not make the grade? It must be ready with alternative plans; otherwise the economy will be gripped by menacing shortages. Likewise, if large scale units are, as stipulated in the policy statement, to depend in many cases on internally generated resources, what is the arrangement which the Government is going to offer to enable these units to jack up profitability sufficiently to generate reserves, except through conceding instead of remonstrating against the resultant price increase? In other words is too large a role being assigned to small producers without adequate homework or how the entire exercise can be saved from becoming a fiasco? In any event whether the goods are sought to be produced in more and more places of the small sector or in the big sector, if next to nothing is done to create the purchasing power to buy all these goods there will be a colossal waste of effort and resources".

There was a spurt in industrial unrest after the Janata Government came to power. This caused concern to The Hindu which wrote (on July 2, 1977):

'There is an air of unrealism — or should we say insensitivity? — in the attitude of the Government at the Centre toward the deterioration in labour-management relations in the past few weeks. Under the strong umbrella of the Emergency the former Government did not find it too difficult to resort to any measure it wanted to enforce discipline in this field. From the Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai, downwards, nearly every leader of any consequence in the new Government has been making a quip about bottled up restiveness bursting out after a fairly long period of frustration. Flowing from this was the feeling that the reappearance of gheraos, demonstrations and strikes would be a passing phase. Such a view can no more be considered valid, the public may no longer be willing to buy it. The situation is particularly distressing in Bihar and Kerala, although lightning strikes in Bombay port and Madras city transport gained quick and wide publicity. . . It is true that managements — of public and private sector companies — did have an upper hand during the Emergency when there was an indulgence in lock-out and lay-off, even if it was for no fault of their own but the result of factors like power cuts. It is a suicidal course for labour to persist with the idea of striking back recklessly in acts of retribution encouraged by the notion that the lid is off now. Nor can the Government sit back with folded hands, hoping that the problems will go away sooner or later. It must tackle them promptly and earnestly.'

The Janata Government at the Centre completed six months in office in October, 1977. The Hindu was disappointed that the Janata Government had failed to rise to the people's hopes, "after the trouncing of the authoritarian regime" which appeared to signify "the beginning of a new era". "Those common people", it wrote, "clearly cared far more deeply about democratic rights and civil liberties than most persons, including Mrs. Indira Gandhi, had given them credit for before the general elections. Having registered their anger against the old regime they looked towards the not so young men who ascended the gadi with a mixture of joyous hope and slightly puzzled expectation. It is these hopes and expectations that are being dissolved before our very eyes as the new regime moves well past the six-month mark in office."

The Hindu noted that the Congress "fallen from dizzying heights of power faced wide ranging demoralisation, factionalism, the intensification of internal squabbles and potential organisational disintegration. . . There have indeed been moments in recent weeks when the Congress party appeared to be on the brink of organisational disintegration — the third major split of its long historical career. But once again the ruling conglomeration has failed to rise to the occasion, has shown itself utterly unable to provide a real alternative in terms of constructive policies and a socio-economic programme. The fluffy discussions over economic policy and 'the path of development' have not been clinched but this has not been the most disquieting feature of the exercise. What must cause genuine misgiving is the pre-modern and anti-scientific nature and content of the positions taken by some key elements within the party and Government". The Hindu said: "The absence of a unified party perspective, clarity and a constructive development vision is painfully clear. Today it would not be unfair to say that the Janata party presents an unedifying spectacle, speaking with discordant voices, tying itself into knots in solving organisational issues, notably the issue of separate identity of the R.S.S. (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak, the militant volunteer organisation of the Jana

Sangh) whose Chief has declared it "a closed chapter for all time to come", failing to achieve the much vaunted 'emotional integration', pulling in contrary directions". The Hindu said the Janata "must honestly ask the question of how well it has answered the challenge of development in a country with huge resources and with the great advantage of having the second largest population in the world. It must truthfully answer the question of how it has gone about the tackling of the basic problems of nearly 650 million people".

The third major split in the Indian National Congress, which was foreseen by The Hindu in its editorial on the Janata Government in office came about in January, 1978. But much earlier The Hindu had taken notice of Mrs. Gandhi's public postures and activities which provoked it to write (on October 6, 1977) "Mrs. Gandhi and those who were very close to her during the Emergency have certainly a great deal to answer for before the people and wherever necessary before the courts. Their attempts to pose themselves as much wronged champions of democracy, social justice and the 'weaker sections' of society are not at all convincing and therefore will take them nowhere".

Mrs. Gandhi again came in for strong criticism at the hands of The Hindu in November, 1977 when she refused to testify before the Shah Commission which was enquiring into Emergency excesses. The Hindu said the "demagogic and intemperate attack" by her "on the credentials, motivations, basic conduct and modalities of the Shah Commission" clearly revealed "a position of desperate political weakness although it is possible that she and her coterie of inflexible supporters have persuaded themselves that a memorable constitutional and legal point has been scored against her opponents. The more immediate issue concerning Mrs. Gandhi's political career and the career of the Congress Party — now emotionally divided into two at the national level for all that we saw of the theoretical display of unity — is the solemn warning that once the Commission is convinced that the Emergency was an "excess" and a misdeed as set forth in its terms of reference there will be no escape from enquiry for those who are *prima facie* involved. It is clear that Mrs. Gandhi's tantrums and shrill protests are at most holding play until stage II of the enquiry — the stage of conducting proceedings to fix specific and individual responsibility — is reached. Stage I is still open-ended, it appears a near certainty that Mrs. Gandhi will figure as the focus of stage II".

The Hindu said. "That Mrs. Gandhi has chosen to appeal to the constitution and the law is only to be expected. Nobody and certainly not Justice Shah has disputed her right to whatever protection she is entitled under a proper interpretation of the constitution and the Commission of Enquiry Act, although there is a strong element of the bizarre in her appeal to a Constitution she and her coterie worked furiously to subvert and destroy during the long and tiresome Emergency rule. In fact, the most impressive area of material and data that the Shah Commission has sampled so far in stage I of its unusual enquiry relates to the very grave charge that under Mrs. Gandhi's Prime Ministership, an extra constitutional centre unleashed ferocious and widespread repression against political opponents and even against some ordinary people, abolished all distinction between party and state as well as the distinction between a caucus within the party and the party, and trod under its brutal but very vulnerable heel the norms of Parliamentary Democracy, political morality, constitutional and legal procedure and common decency". The Hindu said:



"Only diehard supporters of the ways of the former Prime Minister will dispute the fact that the Shah Commission has gone about its business in an exemplary manner"

When the Congress split was officially announced in January, 1978, The Hindu said, "It reveals unmistakably farcical characteristics. For how else is one to comprehend the various claims and noises made at the 'National Convention of Congressmen' that concluded recently. The forces that assembled at Delhi in defiance of a specific party appeal dedicated themselves by verbal tricks and political sleight of hand to restoring coherence, direction and unitariness to the political process of the country, to championing the interests of the 'downtrodden' and of minorities, to providing strong and patriotic leadership and incredible as it may sound, to refurbishing democratic political culture. The nature and quality of their programme were expressed above all in the act of declaring Mrs. Indira Gandhi — beyond the slightest regard for legality, constitutionality and party procedure — the Congress President. All this signifies that the forces of different complexion that have banded together as followers of Mrs. Gandhi have adopted the strategy of going to the people openly — in contrast to the hesitant and ambiguous official Congress leadership — in defence of the Emergency. Not merely is there no trace of remorse for the towering wrongs done to the nation during this regime. There is social blindness and arrogance at large, reflected in the statement on the 'real cause of the defeat, viz., the reactionary combine of internal and external forces'. The outlook of Mrs. Gandhi and her henchmen who have captured an unknown part of the Congress Party organisation is blatant. It is to prey upon the complex and uncertain developing situation of the present in order to develop muscle for what bids fair to be the command centre of disruption in the country"

The Hindu said: "It is the deep going process of exposure taking place before the Shah Commission and the other commissions investigating Emergency misdeeds that explains the desperation, the panic, the stridency that characterise the tactics of Mrs. Gandhi and her entourage".

"The 1978 Congress split", The Hindu wrote, "is an advanced development and working out of the process of differentiation within the Congress Party that began some years ago in response to what was at that time claimed (many would say falsely) to be live ideological issues and in response to the opposition generated against the inability of the party to solve concrete problems of the people concretely. This does not of course mean that any real 'politics of conviction' motivated and issued from the 1969 split. Political, factional and personal factors contributed to the emergence of two lines within the ruling camp at that time, one of which went successfully to the people on a platform of populism and demagoguery — which is after all the art of playing upon the misery, the feelings, the sentiments of the 'downtrodden' while maintaining the existing state of affairs and more particularly one's own sway over everything that matters"

The Hindu said: "The politics of conviction so ceremoniously propounded by Mrs. Gandhi in 1969 was gradually undone, as is clear now, on account of its own internal stresses and contradictions, its unaccountable inaction in the matter of offering positive policies, its authoritarian tendency in party and Government. It is equally clear that those in the official Congress cannot wash

their hands of their own responsibility for the condition that enabled a small coterie of power-wielders to run amok and smother the natural urges of democratic life".

"The political conglomerate", The Hindu added: "that has replaced the Congress at the Centre has not shown itself capable so far of solving the basic problems of the country that eventually got the better of the Congress. The Janata party has failed to provide imaginative and constructive solutions to these. It has been tormented by internal strife and factionalism and is still to work out for itself an effective policy framework. The Janata Government has failed to overcome the serious weakness, injected into the body politic by the polarisation of electoral results between the North and South; it has by its structure and functioning laid itself wide open to the charge that it is basically a party of one zone of the country which *ipso facto* becomes neglectful of the interests of the other".

The Hindu concluded: "In the new year, the single most important characteristic of the political situation is the instability and uncertainty in relation to basic questions that have been brought into sharp relief by the third major split of the Indian National Congress in its 92 year-old history. Both Congressmen and Janataites have been given much food for thought. The way they act and decide on issues in the coming months will be closely watched by the people".

The results of the elections to the State Assemblies in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra demonstrated, The Hindu wrote after the elections in March, 1978, "that Mrs. Indira Gandhi's political centre continues to be a formidable force in the country, whatever name or electoral symbol it might choose or be compelled to take". In the elections the Indira Congress (or the Congress-I as it was officially called) swept the polls in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, while securing a sizable number of seats in Maharashtra. Analysing the results, The Hindu came to this conclusion. "In the first place it is clear that the 'Janata wave' representing a spontaneous mass reaction against the Emergency regime has been confined by and large to the Hindi-speaking zone of the country. The big swerve against the Congress did not mean that the traditional influence of that party among the masses had been liquidated. What stands out today is that the Janata has failed to consolidate and expand the initial approbation it received from the people. Secondly, the impression that the country has been politically divided into a Janata-dominated North and predominantly Congress-ridden South, with entirely different patterns emerging in some other regions, has been strengthened. The forces which have been strong in the South over a number of years remain strong here. . . Thirdly in Maharashtra and Assam, the Janata has made certain gains notably in the urban areas and among the middle classes, but these gains have not been so clear cut as to enable it to introduce political stability".

The Hindu warned the Janata leaders not to fall into the temptation of treating the Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh results as reflecting the "defiant behaviour of benighted states or even of a benighted South. If they act on any such impression the consequences for the unity of the country could be disastrous. The strong feeling already exists in the South that the Janata is the party of the North and the language policy of the Central Government has certainly done nothing to counter this dangerously divisive impression among

the people. It is not as if the party ruling at the Centre has failed simply to build an organisational base in the southern states. The weakness is far more serious, it is a larger political weakness of policy, programme and vision. India is a huge and extraordinarily complex country with a host of socio-economic problems crying out for solution. The multi-party system that prevails can be made to work in the first instance only if democratic norms are scrupulously followed and the people's verdict is respected and secondly, and most important, if the basic problems of the people are tackled urgently and on a massive scale by an imaginative socio-economic programme."

Here we must stop. We have travelled far into recent history and events which are still fresh in the minds of the people and are too near for us to make unalterable judgments and form irrevocable opinions. But these recent years and the present have witnessed dramatic developments on the political scene and we may have not seen the last of them and this chronicle of the birth and epic growth of a newspaper which has played so vital a role in the political and social history of this country for 100 years will be incomplete and wanting if it does not deal with them as recorded in the pages of *The Hindu* however inadequate and unsatisfactory it may be.

A recent survey of newspaper readership in Madras by a Bombay research group found that 10 per cent of adults in the city are readers of *The Hindu* as compared to three per cent and one per cent for the two other daily English newspapers. The readership of *The Hindu* is particularly high among both the lower and upper income classes, among those educated above matriculation, among the youngest and oldest age groups and among professionals and traders. The Hindu readers are well spread over all the income categories. A large proportion of the readers of the other two dailies also read *The Hindu*. Most of the readers of *The Hindu* are habituated to reading the paper thoroughly compared to the other papers.

A survey of the entire region in which *The Hindu* circulates revealed that 57 per cent of *The Hindu* readers are between the ages of 15 and 24, 86 per cent of them have college education and 46 per cent of professionals and 34.5 per cent in other occupations read *The Hindu*. Seventy per cent of the readers find the feature "Letters to the Editor" especially interesting as compared to other papers. It has also been noted that once a reader switches over to *The Hindu* he rarely leaves it for another. There is an invisible bond that ties the paper to the reader and it cannot easily be broken. This has been the paper's experience from its very inception.

The intimacy that has developed between the reader and the paper is something unique in the annals of journalism. A Hindu reader in the south generally refers to the paper as "our paper", "our Hindu", claiming a proprietary interest which is born of love and respect. He would not take cognisance of any news item unless it appeared in *The Hindu* and until it appeared it would merely be an unconfirmed report so far as he was concerned. Students scanning examination results in the papers always make sure their results are confirmed by *The Hindu*. It has happened once or twice that owing to printers' mistake wrong results had appeared and believing them to be true disappointed students have committed suicide.

"Nothing is news until it appears in *The Hindu*", a proud Assistant Editor of *The Hindu* remarked once. He was also responsible for saying: "Hindu editorials are not leaders but judgments"

The Hindu would rather delay an unverified sensational story and incur displeasure from a section of the public than publish something which is not authentic and absolutely true. It does not give currency to speculative reports, rumours and politicians' kite flying unless it is satisfied there is some element of truth behind them. It forwards many letters from readers complaining of official lapses and such like matters to the concerned officials or departments for their comments and publish them with the official reply if necessary or inform the correspondent directly of what the official has to say. This reader service is greatly valued both by the readers and government officials who are enabled to keep in touch with public opinion.

The Hindu follows scrupulously the dictum laid down by C. P. Scott, the famous Editor of the Manchester Guardian "Its (newspaper's) primary office is the gathering of news. At the peril of its soul it must see that the supply is not tainted. Comment is free but facts are sacred. The voice of opponents no less than of friends has a right to be heard. Comment also is justly subject to a self-imposed restraint. It is well to be frank, it is even better to be fair."

Over a long period of devoted service to the people to whom it is not merely a newspaper but a course of education, The Hindu has built up a reputation for honesty, sanity and integrity that has given it strength and vigour to push forward to new fields of conquest and achievement. When it was founded 100 years ago by a band of young patriots as the mouthpiece of Indian opinion its task was limited to protecting the interests of the 'native' community, to espouse the cause of Indianisation of the services and to protest against official misuse of power against the sons of the soil. It had great faith in the wisdom and judgment of the rulers, in the British Parliament and in the great Empress who ruled over the 300 million Indians and it thought the British connection was "divine ordained" and unbreakable. But the march of events forced The Hindu to change its opinion and slowly it began to see British rule in its true colours. It was in the vanguard of the nationalist upsurge in the early 1920s and was its mentor and champion. And it was in the front line of the battle of freedom throwing open its columns, resources and enormous influence in an unsparing effort to achieve the nation's goal. It has been given to few newspapers in the history of subject nations to play such a remarkable and enduring role as The Hindu did for over 60 years since the day when it sponsored and nurtured the Indian National Congress and until freedom was won. The Hindu was the great forum in which the battle of minds was fought and won, in which powerful personalities clashed and triumphed or were humbled, in which exploits of village Hampdens and pinchbeck Hitlers were recorded and in which the greatest story of the world, of a peaceful, unarmed people marching relentlessly forward facing bullets and untold suffering and sacrifice to their appointed destination, was told with its glorious chapters of heroism and courage and also the dark, ugly chapters of oppression and cruelty.

The late Yakub Hasan, who was a Minister in the Congress Government in Madras in 1937 said of The Hindu: "The Indian National Congress does not boast of any other adherent among journals that has stood by it so faithfully in all its vicissitudes and has rendered it yeoman service in carrying on its propaganda far and wide in a manner that was only possible by a paper of The Hindu's antecedents and position."

"For over half a century", said another admirer at the time of its diamond jubilee, "The Hindu has laboured hard to mould and guide public opinion so much so that it can be truly said that the history of its growth is the history of the growth of nationalism in this country, a country of many peoples and many religions. It has ever consistently given its support to all just and righteous causes, never failing vigorously to denounce principles and activities subversive of progress or likely to corrupt the even course of public life. It has throughout exhibited a peerless independence, a broad and farsighted vision and a complete freedom from all petty narrow minded prejudices."

Hamilton Fyfe, the great British journalist said in 1928 "I do not think it would be possible for any intelligent person, who was also a person of goodwill, to read The Hindu regularly and not feel that the case for Indian self-government might be considered as proven by it alone. If a newspaper of this character had even a small circulation in a country, that country could not be accounted unfit to govern itself. How much stronger the case is when we reflect that The Hindu is one of the most widely circulated and influential journals in India? It is conducted with conspicuous ability, its criticism is fair and independent and its comment on public affairs is temperate and well-informed"

The Hindu has often been criticised by its friends and foes alike for saying something it felt needed saying and not saying something which it felt should not be said. It commands such universal respect and faith among its vast numbers of readers belonging to all parties and all classes of people that everyone of them wants it to reflect his or her views or thinking on a burning topic, political or otherwise. The Hindu replied to these readers when it wrote on a historic occasion "We must make it clear that we are an independent non-party newspaper wedded to the national interests as we see it. We are not the mouthpiece of any party. We have been more often critical of the ruling party perhaps than singing its praises. We have always made a distinction between programmes and measures on the one side and personalities and parties on the other. Our criticisms have been primarily concerned with the unwisdom or inappropriateness of certain policies or decisions and whatever Governments may come to power . . . we shall continue to judge them not by their professions but by their performance"

There is always "a Hindu way of doing things", as mentioned by one of its great assistant editors. Many of those who had been on the paper sufficiently long had perhaps acquired it, imbibed it, without their being quite conscious of it. In the case of some who held responsible positions there came every day the need and opportunity to make judgments by which ultimately they would stand or fall. They would have to ask themselves at crucial moments with perhaps very little time for reflection, "Is this done? Shall I by doing it be true to the tradition or shall I be false to it?"

A great institution like The Hindu is the product of not one man, not a dozen men of genius, but of successive generations of devoted workers, all animated by a dominant ideal. So much so those who are at the helm of affairs on such a paper have a very great responsibility for continuity, balancing the claims of the past and the present, of tradition and innovation. And it is this feeling of great responsibility of being true to its past and loyal to its great tradition and at the same time being aware of the present and the challenging tasks posed by it that animates those guiding the destinies of The Hindu today.

# Index

- "A Native Observer," columnist of *The Hindu* 52-3, identity revealed, writings, 54-7
- Abdullah, Sheikh, 670
- Accession, 662, 670, 682, 684-5, 689
- Administration and administrators, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42, 66, 86, 92, 93, 98, 99, 103, 104, 105, 118, 119, 124, 130, 132, 133, 135, 136, 138, 142, 146, 149, 156, 164, 169, 170, 172, 179, 186, 189, 197, 199, 201, 213, 233, 239, 251, 255, 258, 261, 299, 300, 301, 592, 597, 604, Interim Government, 624-5, 627, 641, 642, 645, 646, 651, 652, 665, 672, 681, 696, 703, 709, 710, 712, 713, 717, 721, 722, 768, 771, 800
- Adult franchise, 691, 692, 693, 698, 702, 713, 735
- Advertisement, 82, Madras Mail's accusation, 215-6; 314, Change in page, 733, 737, 739, 752, 778, Colour, 781
- Advocate of India (of Bombay), 107
- Aga Khan, 190
- Agriculture and Agriculturists, 103, 477, 604, 694, 695, 703, 704, 710, 711, 763, 765, 802, 803, 804
- Ahmad, Sir Syed (Sage of Aligarh), 44, 45, 101, 459
- Air Service, 775-6, a striking feat, 776
- Airmail, 381, 520
- Aiyer, V.V.S., 337
- Aldrin, Edwin, lands on Moon, 773-4
- Alexander, A.V., 613, thumb-nail sketch, 614; 616, 617
- Ali, Ameer, 38, 39
- Ali, Mahomed, 279, 331, 542
- Ali, Rahmat, 680
- Ali, Shaukat, 279, 435, 542
- Ali Brothers (See also Ali, Mahomed and Ali, Shaukat), 542, 680
- Aligarh clique, 48
- "Aligarh Sage" See Ahmad, Sir Syed
- Allahabad Oracle, 120
- All-India Newspapers Editors' Conference, 539, 540, 580, protest against Government's ban, 585-6; 589, 747-9, 751
- All-India Radio, inauguration of station in Madras, 497
- All-India Spinners Association, 751
- All-Parties Conference, 331, 359, 362, 382
- All-Travancore Youth League, 486, 487
- Ambedkar, Dr B.R., 418, 531, 721
- America, United States of, 475, 609, 756-7, President of, 97, 601-2, election, 754-5
- American Newspaper Publishers' Association Foundation, W.P.A. Award for *The Hindu*, 783-4
- Amery, L.S., 534, 546, 548, 550, 552, 554, 556, 578, 582, 590-1, 594, 596, 599, 601, 609, 639, 746
- Amphill, Lord, 156-7
- Amrita Bazar Patrika (Calcutta), 159
- Amritsar Controversy. See Punjab repression
- Anandachari, P., 97, 154
- Andhra, Visal, 688; 715-7, birth of the State, 717, 718, 790, 791, 808
- Andrews, C.F., 322, arts by, 335
- Aney, M.S., 438, 444, 588
- Anglo-Indians, 36, 46, 85, 90, 91, 92, 101, 110, 111, 116-23, 125, 140, 149, 158, 179, 183, 192, 215, 259, 461, 635
- Anglo-Vernacular School See Hindu High School, Triplicane
- Annadurai, C.N., 766, passes away, tribute, 766-7; 781
- Annamalai Chettiar, Raja Sir, 377, 558
- "Anon" (Columnist), 162
- Ansari, Dr. M.A., 294, 366, 442
- "Antiseptic" (Journal), 208
- Appasami, J.B., 525
- Arbuthnot, Sir George, 179
- Arbuthnot and Co., Crash, 177-80
- Aristocracy, 100-1
- Armstrong, Neil, lands on Moon, 773-4
- Army, 49, 50, 555, 578, 581, 592, 594, 600, 602, 604, 612, 632, 665, 666, 671, 682, 686-7, 724
- Army, Indian National, (INA): See Indian National Army
- Arnold, Sir Charles, 142, 179

- Arokyaswami Mudaliar, R N., 415  
 Arrests and imprisonments, 107-9, 111, 123, 139, 141, 142, 170, 250, 253, 279, 280, 283, 285-6, 298, 588  
 Arundale, G S., 211, 214, 220-2, 478  
 Arundale, Mrs., See Rukmani Neelakanta Sastry  
 Arya, 78  
 Aryan, nationality, 45, character, 56, literature, 205, 598  
 Aryan High School, 145  
 Ashe (Collector of Tinnevely), 188-9, 258  
 Ashford, Corporal, 85  
 Asian Relations Conference, 646  
 Associated Press of America, 608  
 Associated Press of India, 202, 218, 222, 262, rebuke by *The Hindu*, 273, 289, 299, 336-7, 417, 444, 507, 520, 522, 598, 678, 745  
 Athletic Association, Madras, 87  
 Atlantic Charter, 554-5, 602  
 Atom Bomb, 609-10, 636, 730  
 Attlee, Clement, 510, 590, 609, 610, 613, 620, 629, 642, 643, 645, 657, 658, 681, 685  
 Audit Bureau of Circulations, G Narasimhan, Chairman, 787  
 Aung San, Gen., meets Nehru, 632  
 Australia, white policy, 277  
 Autonomy, 532, 575, 615, 684, 691, 692, Provincial, 232, 233, 245, 392, 408, 409, 416, 432, 433, 469, 473, 482, 491, 492, 515, 535, 540, 554, 592, 655  
 Ayub Khan, President, 760, 761  
 Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, 280, 445, 473, 480, 510, 529, 535, 541, 542, 550, 552, 553, 559, 564, 565, 569, 583, 606, 607, 608, 614, 616, 619, 621, 677, 705-6  
  
 B and C Mills, lock out, 316  
 Backward, 693, Communities, 105, 148, 680, races, 692, State, 711  
 Badshah Khan. See Ghaffar Khan, Khan Abdul  
 Bahadur, Humayun Jha, 139  
 Baker, Sir Ernest, on Kasturiranga Iyengar, 236  
 Balaji, K., 788  
 Balaraman, K., 522, 754-7  
 Baldev Singh, Sardar, 644  
 Banaras Hindu University, 229, 230  
 Bande Mataram, 141, Nagpur incident, 171; 228, 534  
 Banerjee, Surendranath, 64, 173, 189, 247, 248  
 Banerji (Punjab), 357  
 Bangladesh, 758, born, 774  
 Banks, crash—M/s. Arbuthnot and Co., 177-80; Travancore National and Quilon Bank, 488-9, Nationalisation, 769  
 Bannerman, Campbell, 658  
 Bardoli, 285, 435, 690  
 Bashyam Iyengar, R R., 366, 369, 728  
 Bashyam Iyengar, V., 2, 64  
 Basu, Bhupendranath, 232, 258  
 Batliwala, arrest, 476-7  
 Batra (Deputy P.M. of Kashmir), 669-70  
 Beaumont, Richard, 684  
 Beggary, 102  
 Bengal, 123, 132, partition and agitations, 167-70, 460, 644, 645, 648-51, 653, 715, annulment of, 196, 197, ordinance, 331  
 Bengal Famine Enquiry Commission, report, 604  
 Bengal Times, 97  
 Benn, Capt. Wedgwood, 376, 397, 404  
 Benthall, Sir Edward, 531  
 Bentham, reforms, 673  
 Besant, Mrs. Annie, 134, 201, war of words with, 204-25, 229-31, 232, 233, 239, 270, 317, 329, 331, 352, 354, 366, 387, 425  
 Bhagat Singh, 373, 404-5  
 Bhagavatacharya, Madhava Sastra Sampana Maha, 71  
 Bhaktavatsalam, M., 434, 752  
 Bhansali, Prof., fast, 585, 747  
 Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD), 797  
 Bhargava, Pandit Thakurdas, 372  
 Bhaskaraswami Avargal See Zamindar of Ramnad  
 Bhawe, Acharya Vinoba, first war resister, 538  
 Birdwood, Herbert Mills, 120  
 Birkenhead, Lord, 349, 350, 352, 353, 425  
 Birla, 389  
 Birth Control (See also Family Planning), 784, 793  
 Birth rate, 794  
 Black money, 798  
 Blackett, Sir Basil, 354  
 Blavatsky, Madame, 206  
 Bloomer—death of, Gaskwar of Baroda, 301-2, Nissar, 457-8, C Raghunathan, 560  
 Bombay Chronicle, 219  
 Bombay Conference, of non-party leaders, 543, 545-7, 550, 553  
 Bombay Gazette, 120  
 Bombay Presidency Association, 107  
 Bombay Sessions Court, 109  
 Bonnerjee, W.C., 35, 39, 60  
 Bonus, 694, dispute, 781-2  
 Book reviews, 751, 778  
 Books, Indian Politics, 39, Indian Politics since the mutiny, 66, India under Minto & Morley, 199; New India, India a Nation, 201, The India I Knew, 202, At the feet of my master, 205, 207, Gandhi and anarchy, 332, Experiments with truth, 343; Mayo's Mother India, 366; Review by C P., 377-8; All through the Gandhian era, 417; Origin and Development of the Indian Constitution, 454; From Curzon to Nehru and after, 594; Mission with Mountbatten, 746; South Indian Musicians, 752, Nehru's Discovery of India, 757; Elite Press, 785  
 Bose, Sarat, 501, 640  
 Bose, Subhas Chandra, 325, 361, 362, 435, tribute to A. Rangaswami Iyengar

- 453-4; 481, 499-503, 603, 612  
 Bose, Dr. Sudhindra, 368, 380-1, profile, 381  
 Boundaries, Commissions, 655, 718  
 Boycott of, British (foreign) goods, 140, 141, 167-8, 323, 325, 401, Councils, 294-7, 317, 323, 382, Courts and Schools and Councils, 265; *The Hindu* on, 266, 317, 440, Honorary offices, 141, Prince of Wales (King Edward VIII), visit, 279, 542, Simon Commission—See Simon Commission  
 Bradlaugh, Charles, 70, 96, 136, 224  
 Brailsford, H N, 496, 615  
 Brelvi, S A, 331  
 Brown, Hilton, 367, 425  
 Browne, Morgan, 94  
 Bryan, 153  
 Bucher, General, 671-2  
 Buchi Baboo, 89  
 Buchwald, Art, 779  
 Bus, service in Madras, 584  
 Butler, Sir Harcourt, 281  
 Butler Committee Report, 374  
 Buy India League, 521  
 Cabinet Mission, 613-22, 627, 629, 640-641-2, 643, 648, 652, 653  
 Caine, W S, 136, 430, 461  
 Canadian National Council of Education and Leisure, Tagore at, 380  
 Canning, Lord, Viceroy, 21, 119, 689  
 Capital and Capitalists, 243-4, 316, 362, 430, 478, 599, 694, 707, 765  
 Capital gains tax, 794  
 Cardus, Neville, 520, 743  
 Carmichael, Sir Thomas, 196  
 Carol, Sir Olaf, 629  
 Cartoons, on Lord Simon, 355; David Low's, 368, 496, 521, 601, 611, 615, 619, 623, 726; Punch, 494  
 Caste, 55, 67, 75-6, 77, 78, 97, 111, 134, 181, mark (Namam), punishment, 200, 421, 712-3, 784  
 Cawnpore Conspiracy Case, M.N. Roy's programme, Reuter's story of, 302-3  
 Censorship, 23, 237, 262, 303  
 Central Assembly. See Legislative Assembly  
 Centralisation, 691, 692  
 Chakkarai Chetty, V, 316  
 Chamberlain, Austen, 212  
 Chamberlain, Neville, 495, 584  
 Chand, Sir Agur, 63  
 Chauri Chaura incident, 285, 542  
 Chavan, Y B., 768  
 Charan Singh, Home Minister, 800-2  
 Chelmsford, Lord, 232, 253, 254, 258, 593  
 Chepauk Cricket ground, racial discrimination at, 87  
 Chess Association, K. Srinivasan, Patron, 752  
 Chettur, G.K., 236  
 Chettur, S.K., smoking incident, 499  
 Chewing, light and humorous edl. on, 724-5  
 Chiang Kai-Shek, Generalissimo, 755  
 Chiang Kai-Shek, Madame, 476, 755  
 Chidambaram Pillai, V O, 188, 189  
 Chief Reporters, Langley's tribute, 519, first and second, 731, 749, 752  
 Chingleput Ryots' Case, 11, 24  
 Chingleput Salaam Case, 200  
 Chintamani, C Y, 66, tribute to G. Subramania Aiyer, 131, 145, 331  
 Chirol, Sir Valentine, 262, 333  
 Choudhry, Maj Gen N, 687, 688  
 Christians and Christianity, 48, 75, 76, 79, 80, 81, 82, 88, 91, 135, 145, 205, 209, 342, 343, 528, 620, 660  
 Churchill, Winston, 432, 554-5, 561, 562, 566, 581-2, 593, 594, 600-1, 602, 609, 630, 635, 640, 643, 654, 738, 740  
 Circulation, 8, 23, 82, 314, 367, 456, 519, 524, 731, 732, 738, 776, 785  
 Citizen, The, 525  
 Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore), 115, 118, 119, 120  
 Civil Disobedience, 253, 254, 281, 285, INC Enquiry Committee on, 294, 307, 383, 384, 386, 388, 389, 391, 401, 433, 434, 435, 438-41, 444, 449, 470, 487, 489, 534, 539-40, 544, 550, 552, 581, 601  
 Civil resistance, 414, 439, 440, 442  
 Clark, General Mark, 602  
 Clayton, Frank, case, 240  
 Clive, Lord, 21, 658  
 Cochet, Henri, 520  
 Cole, Prof G D H, 709  
 Colleges, comments on, 201-2  
 Columnists, 54, 55, 57-8, 64, 162, 194, 203, 212, 233, 618, 754, of N.Y.T., 779  
 Colvin, Sir Auckland, 41, 43, 44, 68  
 Commission of Enquiry, on Emergency excesses, 806-7  
 Commonwealth, 247, 360, 361, 375, 391, 396, 506, 512, 556, 667  
 Commonwealth of India Bill, 352  
 Commonwealth Press Union, 751, and G. Narasimhan, 787  
 Communal, 304, 341, 362, 396, 397, 398, 410, 434, 480, 481, 482, 512, 513, 515, 528, 529, 532, 545, 547, 550, 551, 562, 570, 573, 574, 576, 577, 583, 591, 596, 603, 644, 665, 667, 668, 676, 680, 700, 704, 712, 713, 760, 767, 795, G O, 695-6, 697  
 Communal award, 418, 444, 460  
 Communal riots, in E. Bengal (Noakhali Dt.), 626, 634-5, 648-9  
 Communism and Communists, 302, 303, 411, 612, 696, 698, 701, 703, 704, 755, 759, 769, 770, 784, Left, 764, 765  
 Confederation, 598, 615  
 Confidence trick, edl., 725  
 Congress, Indian National, 12, 29, 31, birth of National Party, 34; meet in Poona, 35; object, 35; venue shifted to Bombay, first session opens, resolutions, 35; *The Hindu* on, 35-7; second session in Calcutta, 37-9; Lord Dufferin and the, 39-40; *The Hindu* on, 40-2; increasing popularity, 43-5; third ses-



sion in Madras, 46-9, 54, 57, 60, 61, 62, 65, 66, 70, session in Nagpur, Social Conference, 72, 77, 78, 82, 92, Hume's visit, 93-5, Bombay Government's circular, 95, fifth session in Bombay, 95-6, delegation to England, 96-7, Calcutta session, 97, salutary influence on the administration of Native States, 99-100, in Hyderabad, 101, 102, 107, 124, 128-9, 130, 131, 136, 137, 142, 147, 163, 166, 168-9, 170, transfer of venue of session from Nagpur to Surat, 172, 173; Surat session ends in confusion, an account of, comments, 173-6; opposition to session in Madras, Moderates hold session, 189; 190, 191, 209, 213, 216, Mrs Besant, President of Calcutta session in 1917, Europeans as Presidents, 217, 219, 220, 232, 233, 235, 241, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 258, 261, Madras Provincial Congress Committee, 264-5; Congress special session in Calcutta, 265, 267, V S Srinivasa Sastri on congressmen, 268, Nagpur session, 274-5; 279, 280, 281, Ahmedabad session, 281-3, Bombay Conference, 284; Working Committee meets at Bardoli, 285, affairs in Madras, 288, AICC session at Bezwada, 291, civil disobedience movement, council entry or boycott, controversy and compromise, 293-7, 302, 304, 305, 308, 310, 317, 318, controversy between the "No changers" and the Swarajists, 322-4; suspends non-co-operation programme, 325; 331, 332, 340, 341, 342, 348, 350, approves Hindu-Muslim unity formula, 350; Srinivasa Iyengar quits, 351; Swaraj Constitution for India, 351; Simon Commission, 352, declares Independence as a goal of India, 352; Madras Legislative Council carries party motion to boycott Simon Commission, 353, member's (Vishindas) death, 354; 358, Dominion Status or Independence, division in, 360, accepts Nehru Committee recommendations, 360, resolutions of the Subject Committee, 360-1; compromise resolution, 361-2; 363, 372, 373, 380, 382-3, Flag, 385; 387, 391, 392, 393, 395, 398, 399, 400-1, 402, Karachi session, 405-6; 407, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 419, 430, 433, 434, 435, 438-41, 442-3, 444-9, 452, 453, 454, 455, 458, 459, is Fifty, 459-61; Faizpur session, 462; 463, 464-7, issue of office acceptance, 467-74; first Ministry in Madras, 474; 477, 479-84, 488, 492, 493, election of Bose as President, controversy, Bose resigns, forms Forward Bloc, debarred, 499-503; 506, 508, 509, 510-5, 524, 527, 528-31, 533-8, 540-2, 543-8, 550-4, 563-6, 568-78, 581-3, 587, 589, 590, 593, 596, 597, 598, 601, 605, 606, 607, 609, 614-29, 632, 635, 639-44, 648, 649, 651-8, 679, 680, 690, 692, 693, report on working of Governments, 694-5, 696, 697, 698, 700, communal elements in, 700; 701, Avadi session, 704-7, 708, 709, 712-4, 715, 718, 719, 729, 731, 734, 743, 749, 750, 760, 762, leadership contest, 762-3, 764-6, 767, 785, 789, 790, 797-801, 805-8, 810, split, 758, 767, 768-71, 790, 805-8

Congress (Indira), 790, 799, 808

Congress, National (Travancore), 486

Congress (O) (Syndicate), 758, 770, 771, 797

Congress (R), 771

Congress, Travancore State, 485-9, 661

Congress for Democracy, 797, 801

Congress Parliamentary Party, 762, 768

Congress Party, Madras Legislature, 568-9, 572, 695-6

Congressmen, 56, 57, 61, 130, 192-3, 221, 248, 253, 281, 285, 295, 297, 303, 308, 323, 341-2, 343, 357, 361, 372, 373, 392, 397, 405, 411, 413, 414, 433, 434, 435, 439, 440, 442, 443, 445, 446, 448, 459, 460, 462, 466-7, 473, 489, 500, 501, 502, 541, 542, 543-4, 549, 551, 559, 575, 577, 578, 596, 619, 655-6, 695, 706, 707, 713, 723, 751, 766, 785, 790, 807, 808

Connemara, Lord, 57, 62, 107

Conservatives, 107, 330, 397, 409, 416

Constituent Assembly, 663, 691, 692, 718, 721

Constituent Assembly (British India), 468, 479, 513, 515, 529, 530, 533, 576, 606, 615, 616, 619, 622, 627, 628, 629, 630, 637, 638, 640, 641, 642, 644, 646, 648, 649, 653, 654, 660

Constituent Assembly (Pakistan), 655, 658

Constitution, British, 137, 167, 170

Constitution, Indian, 135, 360, 375, 383, 391, 394, 395, 398, 399, 402, 405, 408, 410, 414, 415, 417, 432, 433, 448, 449, 450, 454, 458, 459, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 479, 480, 483, 493, 508, 510, 511, 512-3, 515, 525, 527, 529, 530, 532, 535-6, 540, 549, 551, 562, 563, 568, 569, 570, 575, 576, 593, 599, 605, 606, 610, 613, 617, 619, 623, 629, 630, 641, 642, 644, 648, 749

Constitution of India, new, 691; adopted, 692, 693, 706-7, 713, 721, 764, 806, amendments, 697-700, 701, 702, 705, 706, 718, 720

Constitutional reforms (See also Political reforms), 186, 191, 192, 199, 211, 213, 214, 216, 219, 233, 243, 304, 326, 327, 330, 351, 375, 382, 416, 417, 447, 485, 532

Consultative Committee, 416, 417, 509 11

Coronation Durbar, 195-7

Corporation of Madras, 65, 180, 194, 232, Simon Commission, 358-9; 413, use of the word "Kumbakonam" in a derogatory sense, 631

Correspondents, 5, 7, 11, 22, 23-4, 46, 52,

- 54, 55, 58, 59, 74, 80, 81, 82, 86, 87, 88, 94, 95, 96, 97, 102, 109, 110, 111, 112, 114, 115, 117, 123, 124, 137, 138, 141, 143, 149, 151-2, 158, 168, 170, 172, 173, 174, 188, 190, 198, 202, 203, 214, 218, 224, 227, 229, 233, 241, 262, 269, 282, 283, 297, 298, 320, 321, 322, 325, 326, 327, rise in, 520, profiles of, 521-3, functioning in early days, 523, 525, 603, 608, 609, 743, 744, Agriculture, 778, 779, Staff, 778, 779-80, Education and Science, 780, Special, 781, 784
- Corruption, 445, 604, 672-3, 676, 763, 766, 789, 790
- Cosmopolitan Club, Madras, 164, 202, 312, 319
- Cottage Industry, 708, 709, 802, 803
- Cotton, Sir Henry, 132, 191, 217
- Cotton, Manufacturing Industry, 129
- Couchman, M E, 201
- Council entry See Legislative Councils
- Cousins, Margaret, 465
- Cow, killing, 48
- Crescent (Journal), 2
- Crest, 185, change in, 523-4
- Crete, Island of, incident at, 104
- Cricket, 87-9, 779
- Cricket Annual, 779
- Cripps, Sir Stafford, 556, 561-7, 569, 593, 595, 597, 598, 613, 614, thumb-nail sketch, 614, 616, 617, 621, 644
- Crole (Collector of Madurai), 138
- Cunningham, Sir George, 671-2
- Curzon, Lady, 148
- Curzon, Lord, 122, 123, 148-50, 157-60, 166, 167, 169, 191, 594, 597, 658
- Customs, 132, 134
- Daily Express, The, 728
- Daily Graphic, 96
- Daily Herald, London, 390, 408, 423, 520, 536, 603
- Daily News, 96
- Daily Telegraph, 328, 335, 348, 415, 520
- Dalhousie, Lord, 689
- Dance, Bharatha Natyam by nautch girls, 74, 134
- Dandapani Aiyer, 525
- Dandi March See Salt Satyagraha
- Das, C R, 274, 280, 295-6, 297, 322, 325, 326, 331, 400, 443, 452, 542
- Das, Durga, 522
- Das, Govardhan, 256
- Das, M.N., 193, 199
- Davar, Justice, comment on judgement, 187
- Dawson (The Times), 492
- Decentralisation, 709, 802
- Defence, 352, 360, 530, 532, 535, 543, 555, 562-6, 572, 575, 595, 597, 605, 646, 656, 657, 759, 760, 771-2
- Defence of India Act and Rules, 211, 253, 539, 578
- Del Vayo (Spain), 755-6
- Democracy, 100, 101, 238, 375, 398, 418, 424, 446, 478, 506, 510, 513, 518, 519, 550, 567, 579, 590, 609, 611, 645, 695, 697, 598, 700-2, 706, 707, 709, 724, 734, 738, 763, 764, 766, 772, 783, 784, 800, 805, 806
- Democrats, 267, 415
- Demonstrations, 626-7, 763, 805
- Depressed classes, Mission Society, of India—Madras Branch, 316, 354, 356, 418, 419, 531, 605, 625, 626, 633
- Derby, Lord, 90
- Desai, Dewan Bahadur Ambalal, 173
- Desai, Bhulabhai, 331, 442, 448, 493, 529, 625
- Desai, Mahadev, 253, 449, 513, 540, 633
- Desai, Morariji, loses Congress party leadership contest, 762-3, dismissal from Cabinet, 769, Prime Minister, 800, 805
- Desikachariar, V C, 163
- Despotism, 99, 100, 140, 166, 186, 201
- Devadasis See Nautch girls and parties
- Devadhar, G K, 235, tribute to Kasturiranga Iyengar, 312
- Devadoss (Columnist), 212
- Devanagari script, 718, 719
- Dewan of Travancore, clash with *The Hindu*, 484-91, 523, 531, 645, 660-2, 688, 753
- Dewey, Thomas E., 754
- Digby, William, 81, 137
- Disturbances, in Amritsar, 253-4, 283, 286, in Madras, 354, 356, in Travancore, 486-7, 578-81, casualties, stats, 588, 596, 612, 613, Muslim League's "Direct Action Day" 623, in E Bengal, 626, in Lahore, 643, in Pakistan, Indian Punjabs, N W F P of Pakistan, 664-5, in Delhi, 666, casualties in Punjab and Delhi States, 666-7, Nehru on, 667; in Kashmir, 670, in East Pakistan, 740, 758, Language See Riots, anti-Hindi
- Dominion of India, 653, 656, 657, 659, birth of, 663, 668, 682, 685
- Dominion of Pakistan, 653, 656, 657, 659
- Dominion Status, 284, 305, 359, 360, 361, 376, 382, 383, 394-7, 440, 457, 509, 512, 514, 528, 529, 531, 549, 550, 556, 562, 656
- Doraiswami Iyengar, T., Reporter, killed in train accident, tribute, 291
- Dowry, 784
- Dravida Kazhagam (D.K.), 599, 700
- Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.), 700, comes to power, 758, 765, 767, 771
- Dravidastan, 598-9
- Dravidians, 598
- Dress, standard, for the Indian, 723-4
- Drought, 758, 785
- Drummond, Sir Eric, 423
- Duff, Mrs Grant, 14
- Duff, Sir Mount Stuart Grant, 2, 9, 10-4, 23, 46, 136, 147
- Dufferin, Lord, Viceroy, 37-42
- Duke of Clarence, death, 90-1
- Duke of Connaught, 294
- Dutt, Buddhakeswara, 373

- Dutt, Iswar, 521  
 Dutt, Romesh Chander, 104, 201  
 Dyarchy, 245, 260, 342, 353, 370, 394, 432, 466, 750  
 Dyer, General, 258, 260, 268-9, 333
- Earthquake, in Bihar, 441-2; in Quetta, 457-8  
 East India Company, 92, 658, 672-3  
 Economic Policy, 405, 704, 708, 739, 743, 768, 785, 789, 790, 798, 801, 803, 805  
 Economy, 105, 352, 479, 595, 689, 696, 703, 704, 706, 708, 710, 712, 758, 760, 764, 765, 767, 771, 785, 790, 792, 798, 800, 801, 803, 804, mixed, 708, 711, 738  
 Editorial Conference, 743, 753, 786  
 Editorial Department, 729  
 Editorial Policy, 743  
 Editorial writers, 525, 743, 753  
 Editors, 66, 80, 81, 83, 86, 104, 108, 113, 118, 125, 128, 130, 138, 139, 140, 148, 160, 165, 180, 183, 187, 196, 202, 206, 208, 210, 211, 218, 221, 222, 224, 226, 227, visit to Britain and battle fields, 235-6, 242, 243, 254, 311, 312, 320, 348, 539, 540, 580, 586, 737, 738, 741-3, 745, 749, 751, 780, 783, 810  
 Education, 691-3, communal G O in, 695-6, 710-2, 752  
 Edward VII, King, 197  
 Egmore railway station, address presented to Kasturiranga Iyengar, 236  
 Elections, American, Presidential, 754-5, British, 98, 376, 609, Constituent Assembly, 622, India, 264, 341, 403, 441, 442, 443, 447, 458-9, 463, 465-7, 492, 610-1, 692, 695, 698, 699, 708, 713, 767, 785, 789, 805, General elections—First, 693, 700, Second, 700, 701, Fourth, 758, 763-4, 765, 766; Fifth (mid-term), 758, 762-3, 770-1, Sixth, 789, 796, 800, 808; Mid-term (Assemblies), 790, 800-1, 808, Presidential, 768, 769-70, 800, Madras Corporation, 64-5  
 Electricity, 710-1, power cut, 805  
 Elgin, Lord, Viceroy, and the Madras Mahajana Sabha, 97-8, 119, 148  
 Elite Press, The, praises *The Hindu*, 785  
 Elizabeth, Princess (Queen), wedding, 674, 726, in Delhi, 773  
 Emden, 226-8  
 Emergency, 789-96, 798-9, 805-8  
 Emergency excesses, 789-90, 801, 806-7  
 Employees, 743-4, 748  
 Employment, 708, 711, 802  
 Empress of India Press, *The Hindu* as tri-weekly, printed at, 4  
 Engineering page, 368, 778  
 English, 245, 262, "taken time"—verbal confusion, 611; 713, 718-22, 773  
 Englishman, The (Calcutta), 115, 117, 119, 120, completes 75 years, *The Hindu* pays tribute, 121; 152  
 Erskine, Lord, 470-1, 474  
 Evans, Thos., 82
- Exports, 793, 802, 803  
 Extremists, 140, 172-5, 247, 248  
 Facsimile, 776-7  
 Family Planning, 789, 793-4, 799  
 Famine and relief works, 64, 78, 81-2, 102-3, 279, in Bengal, 591-2, 604, 645, 758  
 Fast, 719, by Prof Bhansali, 585, 586-7, 747, by Gandhi, 280, 418-20, 434-6, 439, 587, 594, 600, 676-7, 750, by Potti Srimululu, 716  
 Features, "Indo-British Topics", 80, News and Notes, 82, Saturday Supplement, 148, Weather Report, Shipping news and Commercial news, Sporting news, 165, Telegrams, 202-3; Table of contents, 203, Sports page, "Literature, Art and Philosophy", 335, Literary Supplement, Saturday short story, 367; Women's page, Trade and Industry Review, Pictorial jokes, cartoons, 368, "Who's what", "International Scene" and "Man in the News", 777; Editorial page—"The Economic Front", "Weekly Delhi Letter", "Among the Nations", "Weekly News letters", "Book Reviews", "Week in Parliament", "Random-notes from Capital", "Our Scientist", "Supreme Court Dicta" and "Parliament Gallery", Foreign features—"Know your Latin America", "Know your Africa", Art Buchwald and New York Times Columnists, "Spotlight", "Background" and "News Analysis", 778-9, "Farmers Note-book", "Leo's Financial News and Notes", "Key to your car", "Know your city", "District Newsletters" and "Science and Engineering Technology", 778-9, on Religion, 779, Friday Page, "In the Garden", 779, Sports page, 779, New—"Outlook", "Special Report" and "Open Page", 780-1, "Know your District", "Saturday Sports Special" and "Education Page", 785  
 Federation, 407-10, 416, 432, 433, 447, 479-81, 491-3, 503-6, 508, 514, 528, 531 551, 575, 576, 583, 615, 652, 681 683, 691  
 Fielden, Lionel, 497  
 Fingleton, J., 779  
 Fire, People's Park, 25-7, newspaper office in G.T., K. Srinivasan's offer, 750  
 Flags, Congress, 385, 474, 612, 616; Janata Party, 801, National, 397, 663  
 Flaneur (Columnist), 194, 233  
 Flood, in Madras, K. Srinivasan's offer to newspapers, 75  
 Foden, Gwyneth, art at R.T.C., 410-1  
 Food, 152, adulteration, 791; crisis, 591-2, 604, 657, 710-11, 763, 766, 785, imports, 791; policy, 791; riots, 242-3, zonal movement control, 791  
 Foot, Michael, 603  
 Ford, Henry, birthday tribute to, 498; 516  
 Foreign cloth bonfire, 280; ban on, 391, boycott, 402, 413

- Foreign Correspondent's award, for K. Balaraman, 754
- Foreign policy and relations, 771, 784, 798
- Forests, deforestation, 103
- Fowler, Sir Henry, 461
- France, possessions in India, liberation, 672; 722, 723
- Freedom, Lord Dufferin on, 42-3; 110, of public criticism, 111; 140, 210, 229, 250, 253, 315, 317, 357, 360, 361, 362, 363, 373, 374, 376, 382, 384, 386, 390, 399, 400, 407, 409, 423, 433, 435, 440, 441, 442, 450, 460, 462, 467, 469, 480, 481, 484, 487, 488, 500, 504, 511, 527, 528, 537, 541, 544, 556, 562, 563, 566, 573, 575, 577-8, 580, 587, 596, 600, 605, 609, 613, 623-4, 629, 648, 655, 656, 658, 659, 661, 663, 664, 669, 679, 682, 693, 697, 709, 722, 723, 730, 742, 743, 750, 810
- Freedom of speech, 281, 478, 485, 486, 537, 548, 784, 795
- Frontier policy, 137
- Fundamental rights, 405, 697, 698, 699, 701, 702, 729
- Fyfe, Hamilton, tribute to *The Hindu*, 810
- G. A. Natesan and Co., 39, 228
- Gaekwar of Baroda, Delhi Durbar incident, 196, death, a bloomer, 301-2
- Galletti, R., "Magistrate turns politician", 559
- Ganapathy (Photographer), 780
- Ganapathy Aiyer, T., 84
- Gandhi, Devadas, 321, 579, 747, tribute to K. Srinivasan, 748
- Gandhi, Feroz, undergoes training in *The Hindu*, 739
- Gandhi, Kasturba, 228, 321, 580, death, tribute, Gandhi's reply to Wavell, 595-6
- Gandhi, M. K., 37, 75, 135, 141, calls on G. Subramania Aiyer, 144; 172, 183-4, 204, 219, 222, 224, 225, first visit to Madras, 228-9, 230-1, 245, 251-4, launches non-co-operation, 264
- Congress accepts programme, 265, *The Hindu* differs, 265-6; 274, 275, 278, in Madras, 279, 280, 284, arrest in Ahmedabad, 285-6; sentenced, 286-7, in Ahmedabad Central Jail, 287; at Yerawada prison, 287; 293, completes one year in jail, 298; 316, 318, undergoes operation, 320-1; released, 322; Council entry controversy, compromise, suspension of non-co-operation programme, 322-5; 327, 331-4, 337, 338-9, 341-3, 349, 351, 356, 360-2, 382-93, 399-403, 404, 407-13, 415, 418-9, 420, 422, 425, 426, 433-47, 449, 452, tribute to A. Rangaswami Iyengar, 453; 460, 461, 463, 467-8, 471-4, 481, 486-9, 492, 493, 499-503, 506-10, 512-4, 521, 525, 527-35, 537, 539-45, 547-8, 550-3, 557, 564, 569, 571, 572-5, 576-8, 580, 581, 582, 587-90, 591, 594, 596, 597-8, 600, 601, 608, 609, 619-22, 633-5, 647, 649, 651, 652, 653, 655, 660, 661-2, 663, 666, 669, assassination, tributes, an incident, 676-9, 680, 689-90, 696, 697, 719, 723, 729, tribute to *The Hindu*, 730, 731, 743, and K. Srinivasan, 743, 750, 751, 759, 763
- Gandhi-Irwin Pact, 400-2, 432, 438, 461
- Gandhi-Jinnah talks, 512-3, 530, 597-8, 651
- Ganesa Aiyer, R., 369, 370, first Chief Reporter, 731
- Gathani, Batuk, 758, 779
- Gelder, Stewart, 601
- Geneva Disarmament Conference, 423-4
- George V, King, ascends throne, Coronation, in India, Coronation Durbar, 195-7; Silver Jubilee, 457
- George VI, King, 729
- George, Lloyd, 238, 292, 673
- German News Agency, 505
- Germany and Germans, 226, 237, 238, 239, 429
- Ghaffar Khan, Khan Abdul, 616, 617, 621, 626, 653, 655
- Ghose, Aurobindo, 66, 172, 187-8
- Ghose, Lal Mohan, 382
- Ghosh, Mon Mohan, 60
- Ghosh, Dr Rash Behari, 173, 189
- Ghosh, Sarojini, 187
- Gillman, 258
- Giri, V. V., 288, 769
- Gladstone, death, 137
- Glancy, Sir Bertrand, on Jinnah, 612
- Goa, 672, 722, 723
- Godse, Nathuram Vinayak, 677
- Goebbels, cartoon, 505
- Goenka, Ramanath, tribute to K. Srinivasan, 749
- Goering, 635
- Gokhale, G. K., 90, 105, apology to Bombay Government, 111-3; 142, 172, 189, 382, 452, 590, 680
- Goldingham, J., 3
- Gopala Reddi, B., 695
- Gopala Row, Rai Bahadur T., 74
- Gopalan, Kasturi, Co-proprietor, 319; Printer and Publisher, 349; K. Srinivasan's letter from London, 491-2, portrait of, 518, and Sports page, 520, 525, 742, 753, introduces a feature on religion, 779; passes away, profile, Readers' tributes, 785-7
- Gopalaswami Ayyangar, N., 718
- Goschen, Lord, 369
- Gour, Sir Harsingh, 355
- Government, Caretaker, 622
- Government, Coalition, 620, 764
- Government, Interim, 606, 607, 613, 617-22, Nehru's, 623; 624-8, 640-2, 646, 648, 650-2, 657
- Government, National, 534-6, 543, 551, 554, 564-5, 558-70, 579, 592, 601
- Government of India (Indian), 623, 624, 625, 664-8, 670, 671-2, 676, 684-8, 695, 699, 703, 704, 708, 709, 711, 716, 717, 719, 722, 723, 737, 739,

- 742, 747, 768, 789, 791-7, Janata, 789-90, 796, 800, 801, 804-6, 808
- Government of India Act, 414, 549, 552, 582, 652
- Governor-General, 123, 170, 237, 432, 482, 483, 566, 624, 658, of Free India, 657-8, 663, 681
- Governor-General of Pakistan, first, 657-8
- Govindaraghava Aiyer, L. A., 228
- Govindarajan, S. A., 525
- Govindas, Lodd, 65, 129
- Grace, W. G., 87
- Grahame, W. F., 154
- Grand Trunk Express, vagaries of, 674-5
- Grant, Nugent, 142
- Greenlees, Duncan, 413-4
- Greenwood, Arthur, 510
- Griffin, Sir Lepel, 157
- Grigg, Sir James, 470, 594
- Gromyko, 755-6
- Grover, Preston (A. P. A.), 608
- Grubb Frederick, 368, retires, tribute, pix., profile, 430-2, 461
- Guindy, 427
- Gundappa, D. V., tribute to K. Srinivasan, 752
- Guntakal, murder case, 85-6
- Gurunathan, S. K., profile, death, 779
- Gwyer, Maurice, and K. Srinivasan, 549
- Gwynne, J. T., 298, about *The Hindu*, 367, 420, 504
- Haile Selassie, Emperor, 475
- Hailey, Malcolm, 327, 542
- Haji, Variam Kunnath Kunahmed, 289, 290
- Hampanna, Goolapaleni, 85-6
- Hardie, James Keir, M. P., visits Madras, 182-3
- Hardinge, Lady, bomb thrown at, 197-8
- Hardinge, Lord, Viceroy, 196, bomb thrown at, 197-8; 232
- Harijan (Journal), 571
- Harijans, uplift of, 67, 75-6, 77, 134, 135, 316, Vaikom Satyagraha, 333, 342, 384, 419, 420, anti-untouchability campaign, 435; 436, 439, 441, 445, 566, 634, 784
- Harisarvothama Rao, G., 182, 371
- Harris, Lord, 88, 95
- Hartals, 188, 252, 253, 279, 280, 282-3, 354-8, 405, 470, 612, 710
- Hasan, Yakub, 415, tribute to *The Hindu*, 810
- Hastings, Warren, 658
- Hat, wearing of, 201
- Hatta, Dr. Mahomed, 632
- Havelock, Sir Arthur, on Veeraraghava-chariar, 165
- Hayles, A. A., tribute to *The Hindu*, 370; 520
- Heasoldt, Dr., 428
- Heavy Industry, 709
- Henderson, Arthur, 423
- High Court, Bombay, 111, 121
- High Court, Madras, Mylapore temple trustee case, 83-4; Guntakal murder case (Ashford case), 85-6, 89, 142, 153, 163, 177, 179, 188, 200, 203, 208, 209
- Hindi, 713, 715, 718-22, anti-Hindi disturbances. See Riots
- Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, All India, 719
- Hindu*, *The*, founded, idea of starting, weekly, 1; proprietors, 1, 2, early days, 2-3, 5-8, first editorial—"ourselves", 3-4, early editions, 4-5; tri-weekly, 4-5; own premises and press, 4, format and make up, 5; address, 5, subscription, 6, transport, 6, purchases building, 6, support of the Muslim community, 6-7, on reading habits, 7; becomes a Daily, 7; an All-India paper, first English journal owned and edited by Indians, 8, collision with the British administration, 9-10, champion of the peoples' rights against Authority, exposes official scandals, attacks Governor Grant Duff, 11-15, on Viceroy, 16, on bureaucracy, 16-7, on Lord Ripon, his policy and administration, 17-21, make up and layout of the tri-weekly, 22, news coverage, 22-3, letters to the Editor, 23-4, National Newspaper, 24, on local and civic problems, 24-7, call to its countrymen, call for a National Party, 28-34, announces birth of National Party, 34-5; on the first session of the INC, close association begins, 35-7; on second session of the INC, 37-9, on Lord Dufferin and the Congress, 39-42; welcomes Lord Dufferin's proposals for reconstitution of Legislative Councils 42-3; on increasing popularity of Congress, 43-5, on third session of INC, 46-9; on Hindu-Muslim quarrels and the Russian danger, 49-50; Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations' forced collection of funds, 50-1; on visit of Prince of Wales (Prince Albert Victor), 52-3; as a daily, format and layout, writings of columnists, 54-64, first case of defamation against, Editor fined, 59, on Norton, 64-6; widow remarriage, abolition of child marriage, raising the age of marriage, 67-73, campaigns against nautch parties, 73-5, views on caste system, espouses the cause of Harijans, 75-6, uplift of women and on jewellery, 76-7; on caste system, 77-8; London Correspondent, 80-2; popularity, increase in number of pages, subscriptions and editions, 82; feature—"News and Notes", 82; Mylapore Temple Trustee case, 83-4; on nuisance on the Marina, 84; Obituaries, 84-5; Guntakal murder case (Ashford case), 85-6, crosses swords with Madras Mail, 86; on an "obscene question paper", 87; reports on Cricket, 87-9; death of Duke of Clarence, expresses grief to Queen Victoria, declares holiday, 90-1; praises the virtues of British Rule 91, on discontent in India, administration and

misuse of power, 91-2; reviews the work of the Madras Legislative Councils, defines interpellation, 92-3; on Mr. Hume, 93-5; about Sir William Wedderburn, 95-6; on Bombay session of the Congress, 96, London Correspondent on visit of Congress delegation to England, 96-7, on board the ship Java, 97; Lord Elgin's visit to Madras, 97-8; Naoroji's message to, 98; on administration in the Indian States, the Princes, 98-100; on Sir Salar Jung, 100-1; on Nizam's sympathy with Sir Syed Ahmed, 101; on famine and relief work, extension of railways and deforestation, 102-3; on industry, 103; indictment of the British administration in India, 103-4; Editor in London, 104-7; Sir William Hunter's tribute, 106-7; Poona murder case, reply to Madras Mail, 108-9; condemns arrest and conviction of Tilak, story of trial, hails release, 109-11, on apology of Gokhale to Bombay Government, Gokhale's letter, defends his action, 111-4; anti-plague measures in Madras, 114; advice to Vernacular Press, 118; attacks Anglo-Indian Press, 119-21, 122-3; rebukes the Madras Mail, 119; strictures on Reuter's agency, 119-20; reply to The Madras Times, 120; on plagiarism, and Telegraph Copyright Bill, 120-1; tribute to the Englishman, 121; soft corner for the Statesman, 121; feelings towards the Times of India, 121-2; on the Punjab repression, 123; comments on sensational reports about India in the British Press, 123; reply to The Times, 124; reproduces a review of The Times on the Indian Press, 124-5; announces dissolution of partnership between G. Subramania Aiyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar, the latter becomes the sole-proprietor, 126; financial strain, 126; office, a forum for public causes, 129-30; Sir William Wedderburn and Hume on editorials of, 131; profile and tributes to G. Subramania Aiyer, 131-4, 134-6; takes cudgels against Mrs. Besant, 134; role in formation of I.N.C., 136; suggestion on the administration of India, 136; welcomes election of Naoroji to the House of Commons, 137; London Correspondent's letters, 137; announces death of Gladstone, 137; District News, a feature of, 137-8; role in acquittal of Collector of Madurai, 138; news and views from Princely States, 138; name of the paper as "Hindu", G. Subramania Aiyer's reply, 139; Karunakara Menon on, 139; boycott of British goods, criticises opposition to proposal for, 140-1; on boycott of honorary offices, 141; on G. Subramania Aiyer's arrest and release, 141-3; Bharati's letter, 143-4;

mourns death of G. Subramania Aiyer, memoir, 144-7; sudden drop in news and press extracts, 148; reorganisation, effort at economy, 148; portion of premises to be let, job work in the press, 148; introduces Saturday supplement, 148; welcomes appointment of Lord Curzon as Viceroy, and impressions on, 148-50; death of Ranade, tribute to, 150; death of Queen Victoria, tribute to, 150-1; on conditions in India, 151-2; tributes to, from outside India, 152-3; defamation suit, 153; a limited company, effort fails, 153-4; Silver Jubilee, reports on, tributes, editorial, 154-6; remarks of Lord Amthill, comments on, 156-7, campaigns against Madras Marina Loop Railway Scheme, 157; report of annexation of Kashmir by British Indian Government, opposes, 157-8; editorial paragraphs on—latrine accommodation in III Class carriages of S.I. Railways, Indian servants in English households, motor cars in Madras, 158-9; criticises Bengal Government's "the pronunciation circular", 159; experience of S.V.V. on pronunciation, 159-60; on Russo-Japanese War, 160; death of J. N. Tata, tribute, 160-1; Kasturiranga Iyengar becomes proprietor, 162; M. Veeraraghavachariar continues as Printer and Publisher, Karunakara Menon is Joint Editor, 163, Sankaran Nair and T. Rangachari—partners of the proprietor, 164; Karunakara Menon and M. Veeraraghavachariar leave, A. Rangaswami is Assistant Editor and Manager, 164; reorganisation, 164-5; Kasturiranga Iyengar is soleproprietor, 165; Veeraraghavachariar passes away, tributes, 165; first serious political editorial, 165-6; change in attitude to the ruling power, 166-7; on partition of Bengal, Swadeshi movement and boycott of British goods, 167-70; on Lajpat Rai's arrest and deportation, 170-1; Bande Mataram incident in Nagpur, 171; on INC session in Surat, 172-6; on Messrs. Arbuthnot and Co., crash, 177-80; visit of Prince of Wales (King George V), 180-1; an Indian student in Japan, starts fund, 181-2; on use of the word "Native", 182; welcomes James Keir Hardie, 182-3; one of the earliest editorials on Gandhi, 183-4; on successful termination of struggle waged by Gandhi in South Africa, opens relief fund, 184; A. Rangaswami Iyengar is Printer and Publisher, 184; new look, 184-5; crest, 185; improbable stories, publication of, 185; on Morley's dictum on British aim in India, 186; on the Newspapers Act, 186-7; on Tilak's sedition case and judgement, 187; Aurobindo's letter to, 187-8; proceedings against V.O.C. and others, on tragedy at Tinnevely, 188-9;

opposes move to hold Congress session in Madras, 189, extensive coverage to the proceedings, 189; reviews proceedings of the Muslim League held in Amritsar, 189-90, deputation of Muslims wait on Lord Minto, report and comments on, 190-1; on Lord Morley's proposals for reform and comment on his speech in Parliament, 191-2; welcomes appointment of S. P. Sinha, 192-3, criticises Madras Governor's action of appointment to the Executive Council, 193, Dr. Nair's letters to, 193-4; welcomes new King (George V), 195, on coronation of the King, 195-6, Coronation Durbar in Delhi, 195-7; bomb thrown on Lord Hardinge, condemns, 197-8, indicts Sir Arthur Lawley's administration, 198-9; fights against crazy acts of certain Englishmen, 199-202; rearrangement of news and features, 202-3; World War-I, war specials, 203, A. Rangaswami Iyengar leaves, Kasturiranga Iyengar is Printer and Publisher, 203; attacks Mrs Besant as a Theosophist, 204-7; on controversy involving J. Krishnamurthi, 207-8, Mrs Besant files defamation case, 208-9; on Y.M.I.A., 209; supports Mrs Besant's Home Rule movement and on her internment, 209-12; on British policy in India, 212-3, welcomes release of Mrs Besant, war of words with Madras Mail, 213-5, Madras Mail accuses of profiting by advertisements of European businessmen, reply, 215-6; on restrictions to meet Montagu, 216; tribute to Mrs. Besant, 217; campaigns against Rowlatt Bill, 217-8; Mrs. Besant's accusation of the policy of, reply, 218; on Rowlatt Act, trouble with Mrs Besant, apologises, 218-9; controversy with Mrs. Besant on her anti-Congress activities in England, 219-20; campaigns against Mrs. Besant and the Theosophical Society, Arundale's marriage, 220-2; enmity with Mrs. Besant persists, denounces her opposition to Gandhi, 222; refers to New India, attacks V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, 222-3; attacks Mrs Besant, 223; tribute to New India, 223-4; on Mrs Besant's criticism of Salt Satyagraha movement, 224; Mrs. Besant's birthday, two column pix., 224; Mrs. Besant's death, memoir, 224-5; on World War I, Emden shells Madras, 226-8; Gandhiji's first visit to Madras, report, 228-9; tribute to Gandhi, 229; on Banaras Hindu University incident, 229-31; on Non-Brahmin movement, 231-2; on Dr. T. M. Nair, 232; on the memorandum of the members of the Imperial Legislative Council, 232-3; on functioning of the Madras Legislative Council, 233-4; Editor's visit to Britain and the battle fields, 235-6; Britain's ban on, 236;

Burma Government bans, 237; on statement in the Legislative Council regarding Britain's ban on, 237; false report of the end of the war, 238; announces end of war, 238; hails victory of the Allies, 238-9, brushes with the Madras Mail, 239; on Madras Government's Administration Report, 239-40, reports incidents of racial discriminations, 240-1; on Tagore's visit to the South, 241-2, on food riots in Madras, 242-3; lays policy towards labour, 243-4; battle with the Moderates, 245; comments on the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals, 245-6; on Moderates' attitude towards Congress, 246-50; on practice of self-depreciation, 250; comments on Rowlatt Bills, 250-1; protest against Rowlatt Act, report and comments of the "Satyagraha Day", 251-3, on Gandhi's arrest, 253; on Martial Law in Amritsar and Lahore, 253-4; on suspension of civil disobedience movement by Gandhi, warns the British Government, 254-5; art. on the atrocities in Punjab, Madras Government demands security, comment on, 255-6, letters from readers on demand for security, 257, citizen's meet condemns action of the Government, 257-8; on atrocities in the Punjab, 258-60, comment on Lord Hunter's report, 260; on the Reforms Bill, 260-1, dispute between Moderates and the Congress, chastises the Associated Press of India, 261-2; attacks Reuter, 262; Madras Legislative Council congratulates B. V. Narasimha Aiyer for address in Tamil, 262-3; on non-co-operation, differences with Gandhi, 264-6; on boycott of courts, schools and councils, 266, reply to C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, 266; on Moderates, 267, on Moderates Conference, 267-8; on V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, 268; on House of Lords, 268-9; on Amritsar controversy, 269; on death of B. G. Tilak, 269-70; on racial discrimination, case on Jackson, 270-1; readers' column of, 271-2; make up of, in 1920, 272; news reporting, 272-3; rebuke to the Associated Press of India, 273; on non-co-operation, 274-5; criticises Moderates, 274; sympathises with the Moderates, 275; charges the Moderates, 275; attacks V. S. S. Sastri, Valet story, 275-7; welcomes Lord Reading's sp., 278-9; on visit of Prince of Wales, 279-80, 282, 283; on arrests of Congress leaders, and on Lord Reading's Govt., 280-1; on Ahmedabad Congress session, 281-2; on the role of the Justice Party, 282-3; Sankaran Nair parts company, 284; on Sankaran Nair, 284; on Round Table Conference, 284-5; on C.W.C. decision to suspend civil disobedience, 285; on arrest of

Gandhi, 285-6; Special Supp. on Gandhi's sentence, 286-7; "Congress notes" of Rajaji, 288, Jogiah's letter, 288, train tragedy of Moplah riots prisoners, trouble with Government, rebellion, 288-90, on death of Subramania Bharati, 290-1; tribute to T. Doraiswami Iyengar, 291; story of an exclusive art. published by its rival, 291, on Lloyd George's indiscreet speech on India, 292-3, Council entry issue, opposes, INC controversy ends in compromise, welcomes decision, criticises Rajaji's stand, hails resolution, 293-7; review of situation in India, reproduces from the *Manchester Guardian*, 297-8, special supp. and edl on Gandhi's completion of one year in jail, 298, relations with Lord Willingdon, 298-9, on future of native states, 299, art on the administration of Hyderabad, Nizam bans circulation, comments and criticism on, removal of ban, 299-301, a bloomer, 301-2, criticises Reuter, 302-3, death of C. Karunakara Menon, tributes, 303-4, Justice Party, outspoken art on, comment on defeat of no-confidence motion against Ministry, 304-5, The Kenya settlement, praises V S S. Sastri's statement, 305-6, Kasturiranga Iyengar, Editor, passes away, tributes, 307-12, editorship offer to Sastri, 310; edl in defence of G. Subramania Aiyer, rumours, 310-1, taken to task for publishing the proceedings of the Board of Revenue, reply, 311-2, Kasturiranga Iyengar's greatest contribution as Editor, 312; criticism of Sir C. P., 313; Kasturiranga Iyengar's era, 313-8, Kasturiranga Iyengar's portrait unveiled, 318, K. Srinivasan and K. Gopalan, Proprietors, 319; policy and principles pursued by, 319; S. Rangaswami is Editor, 320, on Gandhi's serious illness, and release, 320-2; on controversy between the "No Changers" and the Swarajists, 322-3; criticises Gandhi, 323-4, welcomes suspension of non-co-operation programme, 325; on Swarajist first entry into the Assembly, 325-6; appeal to legislators, 326; a world scoop for, 327-9; on Swarajists in the Central Assembly, 329-30, tribute to Montagu, 330, on Lord Willingdon's administration of Madras, his message to, 330-1, on All-Parties Conference in Bombay, 331-2; Jinnah's interview, 332; Sankaran Nair's libel case, 332-3, Vaikom Satyagraha, 333-4; changes and additions in contents, 335-6, reply to Swarajya on journalistic propriety, 336-7, on Tamil Gurukula Vidyalaya controversy, 337; death of Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetty, tribute, 338; crosses swords with Gandhi, 338-9; criticises the attitude of Indian mem-

bers of the Executive Council, 339-40; on Congress and National Demand, 340; on Lord Reading's departure, 341; elections, supports Congress candidates, 341, on Congress victory, advice, 341-2, Rajaji's communication and letter to, 342-3; publishes extracts from Gandhi's autobiography, 343, on V. S. S. Sastri and his views of Princely States, 343-5; S. Rangaswami, Editor, passes away, tributes, 346-9; K. Srinivasan is Editor, K. Gopalan—Printer and Publisher, 349, N. Raghunatha Aiyer becomes leader writer, 349-50; on Hindu-Muslim unity formula, tribute to S. Srinivasa Iyengar, 350; Simon Commission, 351-9, on Nehru (Motilal) Committee report, 359-64; Fiftieth birthday, 365-7; new features, 367-8; technical improvements, 368, photographs and arts on Russia, 368; A. Rangaswami Iyengar back as Editor, Assistant Editors, 369, Chief Reporters and Assistants, 369, R. Ganesa Aiyer's retirement, tribute, 369-70; tribute to The Madras Mail on completion of sixty years, 370, death of Raja of Panagal, tribute, 370, Madras Legislative Council, Questions and Answers, 371-2, incident in Central Assembly, 372, Public Safety Bill, 373-4, on Butler Committee report and Princes, 374-5, criticises Sir Mirza Ismail 375-6; British elections, 376, on appointment of Benn as Secretary of State, 376, on Mayo's "Mother India", 377-8; Letters to the Editor, 378-9, Rajaji and Prohibition, 380, Iqbal's lectures, 381, First Indian Air Mail, stories, 381; opposes change in I.N.C. creed, 382, on the plan and procedure of R.T.C., 382-3, on civil disobedience movement, 383; on arrest of Sardar Patel, 383, on Dandi March, 383-7, Vedaranyam Satyagraha, 387-8, on Press Ordinance, ceases publication for two days as protest, 388; on Gandhi's arrest, 388-9; reports of civil disobedience activities, 389-90; Slocombe's dispatch on Gandhi's terms for settlement, 390-1, endorses Pandit Motilal's proposals, 391; on Simon Commission's report, 391-2; urges Government to come to settlement with Congress, 392-3; Jawaharlal's trial, 393-4; on First R.T.C., 394-9; hails release of Gandhi and lifting ban on C.W.C., 399; death of Motilal Nehru, tribute, 399-400, Gandhi-Irwin Pact, 400-2; Second R.T.C., Gandhi attends, 402-4; tribute to Benn, his message, 404; assessment of Benn and Hoare, 404, criticises trial of Bhagat Singh and others, hartal in Lahore, 405; Cawnpore Hindu-Muslim riots, tribute to Vidyarthi, 405, on Karachi Congress session resolution, 405-6, on the Second R.T.C., 407-10; Gandhi's ex-



clusive interview, 410; on Jawaharlal's arrest, 411-2, on Viceroy's reply to Gandhi, 412; on Gandhi's arrest, 412-3; on Police excesses on civil resisters in Madras, 414; appeal to Viceroy to abandon repressive policy, 415-6, on Government's decision for constitutional changes, 416, hails resignation of Sapru and Jayakar, 416-7; on Communal Award and Poona Pact, 418-9; on Depressed Classes and temple entry, 419-20; debate on India, arts, by Englishmen, 420-1, acknowledging editorial error, 422, coverage of foreign affairs through special arts, arrangement with Daily Herald, 423; Illustrated Weekly edition, 423, contributors and their arts., 423-5; caters to variety of tastes and views and aptitudes, 425-7, tribute to S.V.V. on his 60th birthday, 427; S.V.V.'s death, tribute, 428, Berlin Correspondent on Nazi terror, 428-9; Bernard Shaw story, 429-30, London Correspondent retires, tribute, profile, report on third R.T.C., 430-2, on White Paper, 432-3, plea for reorientation of Congress policy, 433-4, on Gandhi's "purificatory" fast, 434-5, joint statement of Bose and V. J. Patel, 435, ed. when Gandhi broke his fast, 436-7; Gandhi's exclusive interview to, 438-9, criticises Gandhi's decision on civil resistance, 439; parting of ways with Gandhi, 439-41, V. J. Patel's interview, 441; Gandhi's dependence on *The Hindu* for news, 441, Bihar earthquake, starts relief fund, reports, 441, hails Gandhi's approval of revival of Swaraj party and contesting of Assembly elections, 442; Gandhi's interview, explains decision to suspend civil resistance, 442; dissolution of Assembly, 443; advice to Swarajist party, 443; trouble with Gandhi on publication of message of withdrawal from active leadership, 444; on Gandhi's retirement, 445-7; favours Congress candidates to Central Assembly, election campaign in Madras, 447; on the report of the Joint Select Committee, 447-8; on India Reforms Bill and Act, 449-50; A. Rangaswami Iyengar passes away, homage, 451-6, P. R. Murugesu Mudaliar, Chief Sports Reporter, passes away, tribute, 456-7, K. Srinivasan is Managing Editor, 457; Silver Jubilee of King George V., 457; Quetta earthquake, 457-8; elections and acceptance of office by Congress, 458-9, 461, 462-3; reviews Government's attitude to Congress, 459; Congress is Fifty, special supp., 459-61; criticises J. Nehru, opposes his re-election as Congress President, 461-2; on Nehru's election tour of South, 463-4; London Correspondent on Nehru's visit to Britain,

464-5, election reports, 465-7; role in acceptance of office by Congress, tributes to, 467-74, first Congress Ministry in Madras, 474, Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, 475; Japan-China War, Madame Chiang Kai-Shek's dispatches, 475-6, on Batiwala's conviction, 476-7, on Bill for relief to indebted agriculturists, 477; M. N. Roy's utterances, G. S. Arundale's letter, 477-8; on Sastri's remarks against the Congress, 479; Visweswarayya's scheme, 479; Nehru's arts., 479; Federal scheme, 479-80, on Jinnah's speech, 480; Gandhi-Jinnah talks & letters on the communal question, 480-2, release of political prisoners, 482-3; appointment of acting Governor, Orissa political crisis, 483; completion of one year by Congress Ministries, 483-4, on Congress attitude to Princely States, 484; political events in Travancore, failure of the Travancore National and Quilon Bank, Dewan clashes with, 484-91; Lord Zetland's tribute, 491, Lord Linlithgow's tribute, 492-3, on approach to Congress on Federal scheme, 493, comment on Times' ed. on the Princes and Federation, 493, War, maximum foreign news, arts and cartoons, first Low cartoon, special arrangement with Manchester Guardian, humorous piece about Hitler, 494-6, 505-8, 516, trouble with school teachers, 496-7; inauguration of AIR station in Madras, 497, a very unusual thing, pays birthday tribute to Henry Ford, 498; abolition of titles, 498; S. K. Chettur's smoking incident, 498-9; Congress President's election, controversy, Bose elected, resigns, debarred, 499-503, meeting of the Princes Chamber, 503-4, rejection of Federal scheme by Princes, 504-5; suspension of Federal scheme during the war, 508, intentions and aims of H.M.'s Government on India, 509-10; on resignations of Congress Ministries, 511, Viceregal talks, 512-3; Shiva Rao's reports, 513-5; idea of a Constituent Assembly, 515; a new home, celebrates Diamond Jubilee, 517-9; arrangement of news, tribute, 519; sports page, 520, additions to news staff, opening of branch offices, expanded news services, special arrangement with British national newspapers, 520-1; Low's cartoons, 521; Correspondents, 521-3; Representatives, 523; Crest, change in, 523-4; tributes in the special Jubilee number, 524; tribute in the London Times' Trade and Engineering supplement, 524; tribute to V.S. Ramaswami Sastri, 524-5; Editorial writers, 525; Reporters, 525; Managers, 525-6; on Jinnah and his two-nation theory, 527-8; on failure of Gandhi's talks

with Viceroy, 528-9; Shiva Rao's reports, 529-31; Keith's letter to, 532; on League's proposal for division of India, 533-4; Shiva Rao's report on "Jinnah complex", 534, plea to Congress, 534-5; on Jinnah's bad manners, 535, on Viceroy's announcement regarding his Executive Council and War Advisory Council, 535-6, on Congress rejection of Viceroy's offer, 536; Shiva Rao on Rajaji's offer, 536; Viceroy rejects Gandhi's request, 537, Bhava as war resister, appeals to Government, P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar disagrees, 537-8; on Press censorship, 538; Rajaji's trial, 538; Jawaharlal in prison, displeasure on publication of letter to his sister, 538-9, suppression of Gandhi's statements, 539-40; suggestion to break political deadlock, 540-1; issue with Gandhi on his policy, 541, Shiva Rao confirms Satyamurti's statement on Gandhi, 542, Bombay Conference proposal, plea to Britain and Congress, Sastri hails call, 543-4; Satyagraha withdrawal, Gandhi declines, comments, M.N. Roy's letter and Editor's note 544-5, Bombay Conference, Jinnah's allegation, denial, Sapru's reply to Jinnah, 545-7; Jinnah declines message to, grievance on free list, 546, on Pakistan scheme, 547; renews plea to Gandhi to call off satyagraha movement, 547-8; Gandhi's statement on Amery's sp., 548-9, K. Srinivasan's and Shiva Rao's role in settlement of the political deadlock, 549-50; expansion of Viceroy's Council, appeal to Councillors, 550-1; fresh appeal to Gandhi to call off satyagraha movement, 551; on release of political prisoners, 552, war, Japan attacks, 552, C.W.C. meet in Bombay, welcomes decision, 552-4; on Liberals' plea to Churchill, 554; Atlantic Charter not applicable to India, Churchill's statement, comments, 554-5; edl on Churchill, on industrialised free India and Indian troops, 555, on fall of Singapore, suggestions on Madras Government's Press note to leave Madras, 555-6, Sita, controversy, 557-8, music concert controversy, 558, Gudur Magistrate incident, 559, Madras Surgeon-General's speech and Editor's note, 560, Edl on letters to, 560, a bloomer, 560, Cripps Mission, 561; advice to Princes, 561, Cripps Press conference, 562, Cripps proposals, 562-3; on joint statement by Sapru and Jayakar, 563-4, Cripps scheme, deadlock, Col. Johnson's efforts, premature edl, failure of mission, an anecdote, 564-6; Col. Johnson's another effort, tribute to him, 566-7; war danger to Madras, Government orders evacuation, 567-8; Madras Congress party's

resolution to concede Pakistan, 568-70; AICC rejects Rajaji's resolution, reactions, C.R.'s campaign, show-cause notice, resigns, 570-2; Quit India resolutions, 572-3, supports plea of Sapru, 574; on the eve of AICC meet in Bombay, 574-5, seizure of AICC documents, declines to publish Government communique, 575; C.W.C. resolution on National demand, 575-6; AICC meet, Gandhi's message, 576-8; arrest of Gandhi and other Congress leaders, disturbances, Government withdraws Press censorship on AINEC's assurance, 578-80; first news about Gandhi in detention, 580-1, appeal to release Gandhi, Shiva Rao's dispatch, 581; on Churchill's statement on India, 581-2; endorses Shiva Rao's estimation of Sikander Hayat Khan, 583, war time austeries, increase in price, page control, 583, bus passengers travails, 584; confrontation with Madras Government, suspends publication for a day, 585-7; Gandhi's fast, 587, resignation of Executive Councillors, 588, on Gandhi's grave condition, 589, Gandhi breaks fast, 589, Gandhi writes to Viscount Samuel, encloses cutting from, 589; Gandhi's letter to Jinnah, Government's refusal to forward, Jinnah's attitude, 589-90, House of Lords debate on India, 590, Indian situation, British Labour Party's role in, criticises Attlee, 590-1, Sastri's letters to Amery, Wavell and Gandhi, 591; Bengal famine, 592, Linlithgow's departure, 592-4, Wavell's appointment as Viceroy, 594; Satyamurthi's death, tribute, 594-5; Wavell's "tentative conclusions", 595; Kasturba Gandhi's death, tribute, 595-6; Gandhi's release, 596; release of Congress leaders, 596; Rajaji's communal formula, Gandhi-Jinnah talks, 596-8; E.V.R. Jinnah correspondence, 598-9; Rajaji's suggestion for international arbitration, 599, M. N. Roy's Constitution for India, Wavell on M. N. Roy, 599; affairs of William Phillips, 599-601, Gandhi's offer, 601, America's lack of sympathy, 601-2, President Roosevelt's death, tribute, 602, Indian journalists visit front-line in Italy, conditions of Indian soldiers at the war front, 602-3; war in Europe ends, 603; San Francisco Conference, 603, S. E. Region War Correspondent, dispatch on INA, 603-4; Bengal famine inquiry report, 604; Wavell Plan and Simla Conference, 605-8, Labour's election victory, 609; atom bomb on Japan, exclusive interview with Sir C. V. Raman, 609-10; Japanese surrender, a national scoop, declares holiday, feature and pix., 610; Lord Pethick-Lawrence, an ardent reader of, extracts sent, 610; Labour Government's plan for India, points out

a verbal confusion in Wavell's broadcast, 610-1, Jinnah's scheme of Pakistan, 611, Naval ratings strike, 612-3, Cabinet Mission welcomes announcement, praises Attlee, advice to minorities on arrival, pen picture, thumb-nail sketches, reports, articles from Brailsford, opening of Tripartite conf., talks fail, welcomes proposal, disputes League's claim, hitch in negotiations, appeals to Congress, Congress' decision, League withdraws support to plan and decides to launch "Direct Action" to achieve Pakistan, 613-22, Interim Government formation, Nehru accepts invitation, 622-3, League's "Direct Action Day", disturbances, 623, Interim Government led by Nehru sworn in, appeals to Jinnah, two-weeks of administration, League decides to join, its nominees, 623-6, communal riots in E Bengal (Naokhali Dt.), 626; Political Department's demonstrations against Nehru's tour, 626-7, Jinnah's directive to League members not to attend opening session of the Constituent Assembly, 627-8, atmosphere in the Interim Government after League's entry, 628; London talks fail, 628-9, Constituent Assembly meets, 629-30; "Kumbakonam" use in derogatory sense, 631, arts. by Indonesian leaders, 631-2, Nehru's visit to Singapore, incident at Rangoon airport, 632, V S Srinivasa Sastri passes away, tribute, 633, Gandhi recalls first meeting with C R., 633; Gandhi tours Naokhali, 634-5, G B Shaw's answers to questionnaire, 635, Nuremburg trial, 635-6, Princely States, C P Ramaswami Aiyer's protest against edl., *The Hindu* and Nehru's reply, 636-8, advice to Princes, 638, praise for edl on Thyagaraja, 638-9; prediction for 1947, 639; welcomes Woodrow Wyatt's suggestion, 639; grouping plan for provinces, 640, crisis in Interim Cabinet, 640-1, Britain to quit India, announces recall of Wavell and appointment of Mountbatten, reactions, 641-2, debates in House of Lords and Commons, 643; Punjab riots, Congress favours partition, 643-5; Travancore an independent state, 645; Wavell's departure, 645-6; Swearing in of Mountbatten as Viceroy, incident, 646-7; Gandhi and Patna paper episode, dig at Mahatma, 647, on Jinnah's sp. on formation of Pakistan, 647-8, Congress' conditions to Muslim League, 648-9; reaction of Jinnah's followers, 649-50, Jinnah criticises partition of Punjab and Bengal, replies, 650; demoralisation of the services in the Delhi Secretariat, 650; Gandhi-Jinnah meeting, 651; Suhrawardhy's interview, 651; Gandhi opposes partition, 651-2; Congress

and Muslim League accept partition, date announced for ushering in new Dominions, broadcasts, reactions 653-5; on Partition Plan, 655, problem of N W F P., 655-6, Indian Independence Bill, position of States, 656-7; first Governor-Generals of free India and Pakistan, 657-8; deliberations in H.C., reproduction from Manchester Guardian, 658, Royal assent to Indian Independence Bill 659-60, Travancore, independence, accedes, deplors attack on the Dewan, Dewan resigns, 660-2, Princely States accession, tribute to Mountbatten's role in, 662-3, heralds advent of freedom, 663-4, communal violence and problems, 664-8; on Indian Muslims, 668-9, Kashmir's invasion, accedes, Indo-Pak War, 669-72; French and Portuguese possessions, liberation, 672, British rule in India, role by the Civil Service, 672-3, Matters' art. on his visit to India, 673-4, wedding of Princess Elizabeth, rare double column display, 674, on British justice, 674, vagaries of G. T. Express, 674-5, Gandhi's fast, 676; Gandhi's assassination, funeral, tributes, 676-9, Jinnah's death, tribute, 679-81, farewell tribute to Mountbatten, accuses Britain for aftermath of partition, 681-2, Kashmir issue, call to U.N., 682-3, Integration of States, White Paper on, Pudukottah merges with Madras, 683-4; Hyderabad and police action in, 684-8, C P Ramaswami Aiyer's art on Princes' failure, 688-9, Sardar Patel passes away, tribute, 689-90, adult franchise, 691-2, 693, adoption of draft Constitution, 692-3, parting of ways with the Congress, unhappy with the spate of legislations, 693-4; Capital-Labour relations, 694, working of Congress Governments in the Centre and States, 694; Congress candidates for legislatures and ministries, 695, Communal G. O in Madras, 695-6, warns the Congress, 696-7, India a Republic 697, on amendments to the Constitution, 697-700; vexed and pained by the trend of Congress policies, advice to voters on the eve of second general elections, 700-1, results of elections, advice to Congress, 701; formation of Swatantra Party, 701-2; economic issues, nationalisation, 703-4; Socialistic Pattern of Society, 704-7; new industrial policy, 708, socialist ideology of the Congress and assault on private property, 708-10; 12th year of independence, state of affairs, 710; discusses five-year plans, points the crucial defect of Indian planning, 710-2, dissensions and factions in the Congress, accuses Congress for failing to build up an integrated nation, 712-4; supports formation of

linguistic provinces and separation of Andhra from Madras Province, 715, report of the first Linguistic Provinces Commission, 715-6, demand for Andhra Province, Potti Sriramulu's fast and death, birth of Andhra State, 716-7; re-drawing the boundaries of States, 718, Official Language controversy, 718-22, liberation of French and Portuguese possessions, 722-3, dig at shabby dressing of Congressmen, 723-4; examples of light and humorous edl flourishes, 724-6, Low's cartoons, 726; retirement of three veterans, 727-32, London Correspondent passes away, tribute, 732, readership survey, 732, a landmark, front page news, change in the masthead, 733-4, first labour trouble, suspends publication for a week, 734-5; newsprint shortage, reduction in size and other economies, 735; on the changed role of the Press in free India, 735-6, on Working Journalists, 736-7, on Nehru's attack on Indian Press, 737-8, "Old maiden lady"—Nehru, 738-9, Nehru's exclusive writings, arrangement with National Herald, 739; differs with Nehru's views and policies, desires Nehru's continuance as P.M., 739-40, Nehru's tributes to, 740, Kasturi Srinivasan's death, profile, tributes, 741-52, changes in Management, 753, foreign news and arts, 754-7, changes in Correspondents, 757-8, situation in India between 1960-71, 758-71, feature of edls after war with China, 771-2, condemns Kennedy's assassination, tribute, 772-3; welcomes Queen Elizabeth's visit to India, 773; on Russian's first space ship, 773, on American's Moon landing, 773-4; on third Indo-Pak War, 774, a decade of progress and many "firsts"—plane service, 775-6, facsimile editions—first in Coimbatore, second in Bangalore, 776-7, metamorphosis on news and display—change in format of editorial page, features, reformation of page one and "News in a Nutshell", features on editorial page, 777-9, G. Kasturi is Editor, policy of appointing Staff Correspondents, 779-80; strengthens staff in Delhi, 780; specialised reporting, 780, Letters to the Editor column, 780, three more new features—"Outlook", "Special Report" and "Open Page", 780-1; *THE SPORT-STAR*, 781, colour weekly magazine section, 781; Srinivasan Parthasarathy passes away, tribute, 781; labour troubles in 1967 and 1968, readers' relief on resumption, 781-3, "Padma Bhushan" for G. Narasimhan, 783; World Press Achievement Award for 1968, citation, 783-4; among the World's ten best newspapers, The Times' description

of, 784-5, praise in the book, "The Elite Press," The Times Correspondent's description of, 785, newsprint scarcity, price increase, reduces page, 785, situation improves, new features, 785, International Edition 785, Kasturi Gopalan passes away, profile, readers' tributes, 785-6, S. Rangarajan, Printer and Publisher, 786, G. Narasimhan, Managing Editor, passes away, profile, tributes, 787-8; strengthening of family ties with, 788; role during emergency, 789, on Janata Government, 789, on deteriorating labour-management relations, 789-90, criticises Mrs Gandhi for her refusal to testify before Shah Commission, 790, on Janata's industrial policy, 790, on third split in the Congress, State Assemblies election results, 790, on corruption, 790, on adulteration of food, 791, calls for a flexible food policy, 791, on relaxation of inter-district zonal movement controls, 791, on economic situation during 1975 and 1976, 791-2; on industrial productivity, 792-3; on population explosion and family planning Maharashtra Bill, National policy, 793-4, opposes Urban Land Ceiling Bill, 794, on two Press Ordinances, 794-6; three basic principles for Press freedom, 796, on early LS poll and political situation, 797-800, advice to Janata Government, 800, dismissal of nine Congress State Governments and elections, warns Janata Government, 800-1; on Congress debacle, 801, Janata's economic and industrial policy, 801-4, industrial unrest, 804-5; Janata's six months in office, 805-6, criticises Mrs Gandhi for her refusal to testify before Shah Commission, 806-7, on Congress split, 807-8, on Janata's failure, 808, political situation on the eve of the New Year, result of elections to State Assemblies, 808-9; readership survey, 809, reasons for popularity, 809-10; role during freedom movement, 810, tributes, 810-1, summing up, 811

Hindu High School, Triplicane, 4, 310, 376, 788

Hindu Mahasabha, 512, 513, 626

Hindu-Muslim problems and unity, 12, 37-9, 45, 48-9, 123, 289, 290, 331, 332, 350, 363, 394, 397, 481-2, 492, 513, 550, 570, 574, 598

Hindu Nesan, 130

Hindu Rastha, 677

Hindu Social Reform Association, 73, 78, 134

Hindus and Hinduism, 2, 58, 67-73, 75-7, 84, 100, 114, 122, 132-4, 145, 146, 152, 181, 190, 204, 212, 220, 221, 238, 338, 342, 350, 363, 378, 394, 397, 398, 409, 418-20, 426, 481, 513, 527, 528, 530, 534-

- 547, 550, 577, 588, 605, 612, 617, 626, 635, 644, 648-52, 660, 670, 686, 688
- Hindusthan Times, 579, 585, 671, 748
- Hiroshima, 609
- Hitler, Adolf, 494-6, 507, 508, 510, 516, 552, 584, 602, 618, 636, 680, 688, 719
- Hoare, Sir Samuel, 403, 404, 415, 417-8, 431, 514, 749
- Hobbs, J.B., 520
- Hockey, Rangaswami Cup, 349, 457
- Home Rule, 66, 204, 209, 210, 212, 214, 216, 217, 223-5, 227, 232, 233, 237, 239, 317, 318, 454
- Hoover, President, 380
- Hope, Sir Arthur, 586, on K. Srinivasan, 749
- Hopkins, Harry, 566
- House of Commons, 33-4, 41, 98, 112, 137, 212, 292, 417, 429, 431, 433, 449, 485, 495, 509, 548, 582, 630, 643, 644, 657, 658, 738
- House of Lords, 192, 236, *The Hindu* on, 268-9; 327, 349, 470, 471, 589, 590, 592, 643
- Hubback, Sir John, 483
- Hume, A.O., scheme, 39-40, visits Madras, 93-4; tours Tamil country, 94-5; leaves India, 95; conflict with British officials, 95-6, 131
- Hunter, Lord, committee report on Punjab atrocities, 258-60
- Hunter, Mark, 201
- Hunter, Sir William tribute to *The Hindu*, on the Congress, 106-7
- Huq, Fazlul, 512
- Huthee Singh, Krishna, (See also Nehru, Krishna), 538
- Hyderabad, 100, 101, 299, 300-1, 532, 646, 656, 684, Police action in, 662-3, 684-8
- Ilbert Bill, agitation, 39; 58, 673
- Illustrated Weekly (*The Hindu*), 525, 732
- Illustrated Weekly of India (Bombay), 751
- Imam, Sir Ali, 300
- Imam, Syed Hasan, 240
- Imam-Clayton case, 240
- Imperial and Imperialism, conference, 275-6; 603, 609, 625, 663
- Imperial Declaration, 100
- Import and Export, controls, 704; food, 791; 793, 802, 803
- Independence, 352, 360, 361, 362, 372, 382, 385, 391, 440, 446, 468, 479, 482, 512, 515, 523, 527, 529, 531, 532, 535, 541, 542, 548, 553, 571, 572, 573, 575, 594, 596, 597, 599, 601, 613, 616, 624, 654, 660, 661, 663, 669, 672, 688, 704, 12th year, 710; 712, 763
- Index Department, 745
- India, G. Subramania Aiyer on, 133; 151-2, 166-7, 291, debate on, arts., 420-1; 602, 659, Dominion, 663; a Republic, 697
- India (Journal), tribute to M. Veera-raghavachariar, 165
- India Office, 30, 31, 104-5, 136, 461, 480, 492, 610
- Indian Airlines Corporation, Dakota carries *The Hindu*, 775-6
- Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society, G. Narasimhan, President, 787
- Indian Bank, birth of, 178
- Indian Civil Service, 9-10, 16, 94, 129, 154, 167, 199, 201, 261, 292, 368, 535, 581, 628, 672-3
- Indian Councils Act, 191
- Indian Daily Mail (Bombay), 301
- Indian Engineering (Calcutta), 157
- Indian Express, 749, tenant, 750
- Indian Independence Bill, 656-60
- Indian India, 343-4, 374, 375
- Indian Insurance Companies Association, Bombay, 625
- Indian Mutiny, 90, 119, 122, 123, 170, 258, 259, 421
- Indian National Army (INA), 603-4, 612
- Indian Patriot, 164, 304
- Indian Social Reformer, 6, 128, 132, 139
- Indian Union, 618, 619, 649, 651, 652, 655, 662, 666, 670, 671, 672, 682, 685, 686, 688
- Indira Gandhi (See also Nehru, Indu), 739, Prime Minister, *The Hindu's* praise, 758; Congress Party leader, 762-3; 768, 769, expulsion from Congress, 770, 771, 789, 790, 797, 799, 805-8
- Indo-American relations, 757, 771, 772, 784
- Indo-British relations, 460, 654, 672, 682, 732, 773
- Indo-China relations, Chinese aggression, 759, 771-2
- Indo-Russian relations, 772
- Indonesia, arts. on, 631-2
- Industrial disputes, 792
- Industrial policy, 708, 790, 804
- Industrial unrest, 804
- Industry, 103, 105, National Industrial Fund, 146, 160, 181, 215, 244, cottages, 521, 611, 703, 704, 707, 708, 710, 711, 765, 781, 789, 792, 798, 802, 803, 804, Nationalisation of, 693-4, 703, 704, 705-6, 708
- Industry, large scale, 802, 803, 804
- Inferiority complex, charge against Nehru and Gandhi, 608-9
- Inflation, 704, 712, 763, 785, 792
- "Inquirer, The", 81
- International Edition, 785
- Iqbal, 680
- Iqbal, Sir Mahomed, 381
- Irwin, Lord, Viceroy, 351, 374, 382, 388, 389, 397, 400, 401, 402, 415, 417, 460-1, 512
- Islam, forcible conversion to, 626, 634, 648
- Ismail, Nawab Mahomed, 616-7, 625
- Ismail, Sir Mirza, 375, 669
- Iyengar, A. S. K., 417-8, Correspondent, appreciation of his work, 522

- Jackson, G. H., Telegraph messenger boy's case, 270-1
- Jackson, G. H. B., Chingleput Salaam case, 200
- Jaggiwan Ram, 797, 801
- Jaisingh Rao Gaekwar, death, bloomer, 301-2
- Jali system, 77,
- Jallianwalabagh massacre (See also Punjab repression), 253-4, 258, 259-60, 332-3
- Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, 504, 531
- Jamabandy, 11-2,
- Jambulinga Mudaliar, C., 154
- James, Sir F. E., 595, 674-5
- Jamnadas, 331
- Jan Sangh, 764, 766, 771, 797, 805-6
- Janata Party, 789, 790, 797-806, 808
- Jawans: See Soldiers
- Jayakar, M. R., 331, 392, 393, 395, 397, 400, 401, 416, 417, 418, 431, 563
- Jepson, Stanley, 751
- Jewellery, 76-7, 231
- Jinarajadasa, 212, 224
- Jinnah, M. A., 232, 326, 331, 332, 350, 352, 362, 363, 370, 373, 396, 397, 448, 449, 480, 481, 512, 513, 514, 515, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 533, 534, 535, and *The Hindu*, 545, 546, 547, 549, 550, 576, 577, 583, 589, 590, 593, 596, 597, 598, 599, 606, 607, 611, 612, 615, 616, 617, 618, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 627, 628, 629, 641, 644, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 653, 655, 657, first Governor-General of Pakistan, 657; 667, 668-9, 671, death, tribute, 679-81; 682, 688, 747
- Jogiah Pantulu, V. V., 288
- Johnson, Campbell, 746
- Johnson, Col Luis, and Cripps Mission, 564-7, *The Hindu's* tribute, 567; 600
- Joint Security Council, scrapping of, 682
- Joint Select Committee of Parliament, report of, 447-9, 455
- Joint Stock Companies, 153-4, 163
- Joseph, George, 221
- Joseph, Pothan, 331
- Joshi, N. M., 552
- Journalism, 8, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 124, 130, 132, 144, 145, 146, 163, 164, 223, 256, 307, 308, 309, 313, 314, 318, 336, 337, 338, 339, 346, 347, 348, 349, 366, 370, 453, 454, 455, 518, 519, 727-8, 734, 736, 740, 741, 742, 743, 748, 775, 776, sports, 781; 787, 795, 809
- Journalists, 131, 134, 137, 146, 196, 204, 256, 314, 318, 338, 339, 346, 348, 349, 452, 453, 454, 455, 459, 464, 523, 602, 607, 608, 609, 611, 667, 679, 688, 728, 777, sports, 779; 784, 795, 811
- Journalists, Anglo-Indian, 116, 119, 131
- Journalists, Indian, 115, 116, 120, 124, 144, 146, 166, 196, 235, 308, All-India Conference, 388; 455, visit war front, 602; and Nehru, 608-9; 736, 751, 778, 786
- Journalists, Institute of, London, 236
- Journalists Association, All-India, 317
- Journals, Anglo-Indian, 34, 86, 115, 116, 118, 122, 188, 222
- Journals, English, 8, 116, 131
- Journals, Indian, 86, 115, 116, 121, 125, 131, 139, 145, 198, 256, 262
- Journals, Native, 86, 125
- Journals, Vernacular, 117, 144, 148, 251
- Journals, yellow, 795
- Jubilee, Diamond, 13, 147, 518, 524, 546, 811; Golden, 147, 319, 331, 365, 366, 518, Silver, 3, 133, 147, 152, celebrations, 154-6
- Judiciary, decisions, 697, 721
- Justice (Organ of Justice Party), 750
- Justice Party, 231, 282, art. on, 304, defeat of no-confidence motion against Ministry, comment, 304-5, 310, 313, 337, 341, 358, 370, 465, 466, 599, 750
- Kaiser, 226, 238
- Kaleswara Rao, 371
- Kalyanasundaram Mudaliar, T. V., 316
- Kamala Nehru Hospital, 539
- Kamaraj Nadar, K., 465, 572, 700, surprise call on Kasturi Srinivasan, 746, praise for 758, 760, 771, 778
- Kanakammal, 517
- Kannada Sahitya Sammelan, 719
- Karanth, K. R., 371
- Karunakara Menon, Dewan Bahadur C., 6, Editor, 130; excellent editorials, G. Subramania Aiyer's praise, 139; tribute to G. Subramania Aiyer, 139, 145, as Editor, 148; appointed Joint Editor, 163, leaves *The Hindu*, starts Indian Patriot, 164; death, memoir, tributes, 303-4
- Karunanidhi, M., 783
- Kashmir, 157-8, invasion, 669-72, 682-3, 753, 760-1, 774
- Kashmir National Conference, 670
- Kasturi, G., Joint Editor, 753; Editor, launches policy of appointing Staff Correspondents, 779-80; receives WPA Award, sp., 783-4; 788
- Kasturi Buildings, 517-8
- Kasturiranga Iyengar, S., Proprietor and Editor, 39; Legal Adviser, 130, 154; 138, buys the National Press and *The Hindu*, Proprietor, 162; biography, 163; idea of purchasing *The Hindu*, Sankaran Nair and T. Rangachari, Partners, letter to C. Vijayaraghavachariar, 163-4; loses the services of Karunakara Menon and M. Veeraraghavachariar, calls for services of A. Rangaswami, reorganises *The Hindu*, 164-5; sole Proprietor, 165; and Mylapore Permanent Fund, 180; Keir Hardie visits, 183; letter to C. Vijayaraghavachariar on Indian political development, 191; attends Coronation Durbar in Delhi, 196; Printer and Publisher, 203; letter from Mrs. Besant, 211; 226, visits Britain and war front, 235-7;

- returns, receptions 236-7, on the ban on *The Hindu*, 237, sea voyage, st on Hindu orthodoxy, Rajaji hails declaration, 237-8, unveils portrait and pays tribute to Tagore, 242, concern for labour welfare, 243, presides over meeting to protest against Rowlatt Act, 252; harassment and persecution of the Press, submits memorandum, 258, Montagu's remarks on A. Rangaswami Iyengar's letter to, 258; on non-co-operation, 264, on surrender of titles and boycott of courts and schools, 265, tribute to Tilak, 270, 284, on the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, for Council boycott, 293-4, discloses Raja Bahadur incident, 301; Karunakara Menon's death, sp. at condolence meeting, 303-4, passes away, tributes, Sastri's pen picture, memoir, portrait unveiled, Gandhi's tribute, 307-19, Gandhi's enquiry, 321; 332, Gandhi unveils portrait, observations on, 338-9, 346, 347, 349, *The Hindu's* tribute on its Fiftieth birthday, 365, 367, 369, 380, 451, 452, 454, building named after him, 517, painting and bronze bust of, 518; studentship in journalism, 522, appoints A V Subramania Aiyer as Correspondent, 522, 525, affection for Satyamurthi, 594, Gandhi visited Madras at his invitation, Rajaji find of, 633; 731, 742, 744, 785
- Keith, A B, 532, 660
- Kelen, Emery, 777
- Kellett High School, 145
- Kennedy, President, assassination, condemnns, tribute, 772-3; news, a feat, 776
- Kenya, denial of rights to Indians in, 305
- Kerosene Oil Workers Union, and Kasturiranga Iyengar, 316
- Kesari, 107
- Kesava Menon, K. P., 287
- Kesava Pillai, P., 11, 12, 86, 181, 231
- Kesava Rao Pant, D., one of the founders of *The Hindu*, 1
- Khadi, 281, 287, 288, 342, 386, 401, 422, 445, 446, 474, 534, 616
- Khaliquzzaman, 550
- Khan, Ajmal, 293
- Khan, Sir Sikander Hyat, 512, 549, 550, death, 583
- Khan Brothers, 655-6
- Khan Sahib, Dr., 627, 653
- Khaparde, G. S., 172, 219, 220
- Khedda operations, in Mysore, 52
- Khilafat, 264, 279, 280, 284, 435, 680
- Kidwai, Rafi Ahmed, 445
- Kingsbury, Francis, 336
- Kitchlew, Dr., 253, 279
- Knickerbocker, H. R., 496
- Knighthood, A Rangaswami Iyengar and K. Srinivasan decline, 749
- Kodanda Rao, P., 671
- Koot Hoomi, Mahatma, 206
- Krishna Aiyer, E., 379
- Krishna Iyengar, B. G., 153
- Krishna Menon, V. K., 423, 424, 759
- Krishna Nair, M., 371, 414
- Krishnamachari, T. A., 752
- Krishnamachari, V. T., 531
- Krishnamurthi, J., custody with Mrs Besant and introduction as world teacher, controversy, 205, 207-8
- Krishnaswami, A. V., 523
- Krishnaswami, C. R., 525
- Krishnaswami, T. S., 523
- Krishnaswami Aiyer, Alladi, 250
- Krishnaswami Aiyer, T. M., 220-1
- Krishnaswami Aiyer, Justice V., 140, 163, 178, 193
- Krupps, threat on Low's cartoons, 521
- Kumbakonam, opening of the Town Hall, 32, 34, Hume in, 94-5; Government College, 201, use of the word in a derogatory sense, 631
- Label headings, 745
- Labour, 243-4, 261, 315-6, 556, 694, 703, 704, troubles in *The Hindu*, 734-5, 781-3; 789, 802, 803
- Labour-Management Relations, 734, 781-2, 783, 789-90, 805
- Labour Party and Government, 220, 327, 329, 352, 376, 388, 395, 403, 409, 416, 423, 511, 566, 590, 591, 609, 610, plan for India, 610-1, 615, 630, 641, 645, 646, 705, 732
- Lacoste, Rene, 520
- Lahore Resolution of 1940, 547
- Laik Ali, Mir, 684, 688
- Lajpat Rai, Lala, 122-3, 139-40, 170-2, 280, 329, 354, 356
- Lakshmi Ammal, 465-6
- Lakshminarasu Chettiar, Gazulu, 2
- Lands, 129, 695-6, 701, reforms, 705, 729
- Langley, W.K.M., tribute to *The Hindu*, 519-20
- Language, 116, 117, 144, Madras Legislative Council, address in Tamil, controversy, 262-3, 715, 719, 720, policy, 808, Bharati, 719, disturbances See Riots, anti-Hindi, National, 715, 718; official, 718-22; regional, 713
- Lansbury, George, 424, 449
- Lateef, Abdul, 38, 39
- Law, British justice, incident, 674, 698, 721, 806
- Law and order, 668, 670, 686, 687, 749, 763, 767
- Law College, Madras 426
- Lawley, Sir Arthur, 143, 180, 198-9, 201, 314
- Lawrence, Sir Henry, 3
- Lawrence and Mayo, 82
- Lawson, Sir Charles, 62
- Lawyers, "Mylapore Group" and "Egmore Group", 163; 166, 169, an ideal Hindu lawyer, 378-9
- Leadbeater, 207, 208-9
- Leader (Allahabad), 131, 140, 145
- Leader writers, 728, 729, 743

- League of Nations, 475  
 Legislative Assembly, 251, 325, 326, 329, 336, 339, 340, 341, 354, 355, 363, 364, an incident in, 372, 373, 375, 392, 419, 443, 447, 448, 449, 459, 531, 552, 594-5, 611, 674  
 Legislative Assembly, Madras, 508, 771  
 Legislative Council, Imperial, 35, Lord Dufferin's proposals, 42, 43, 61, 64, 72, 100, 120, 127, 136-7, 186, 191, 192, 193, 199, 213, 217, 232, 233, 237, 251  
 Legislative Council, Madras, 64, 84, 92, 157, 193, 194, 203, 210, 233, address in Tamil, controversy, 262-3, 298, 312, Meston award, 318, 341, 353, 371, 414, 426, 469, 474  
 Legislative Councils, 92, 135, 141, 191, 233, 248, 253, entry or boycott, I N C controversy, 293-7, 322-4, 340, 341, 342, 349, 375, 399, 441, 458, 749  
 Legislatures, 694-5, 749, 766, 795  
 Leo (see also Seshan, P. A.), 778  
 Lester, Muriel, 402  
 Letters to the Editor, 379, 777, 780, on resumption of publication, 782, 809, 810  
 Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawabzada, 616, 617, 625, 626, 647  
 Libel, 122, against *The Hindu*, 153, 155, against C. Sankaran Nair, 332-3, 726, 795-6  
 Liberals (See also "Moderates"), 136, 222, 245, 274, 305, 306, 330, 331, 340, 349, 353, 356, 394, 397, 407, 410, 413, 415, 417, 431, 448, 461, 531, 554, 556, 636  
 Liberty, 245, 248, 250, 251, 706, 707, 709, civil, 798, 805  
 Linguistic, 691, 712, 713, 716, 719, 760, 767-8, Commissions, first, 715-6, second, 717, Provinces, 715-8  
 Linlithgow, Lord, Viceroy, 472, 483, 492, 493, 509, 514, 521, 530, Gandhi's pen picture, 537, 549, 591-4, 600, 646, and K. Srinivasan, 747, 749-50  
 Lippmann, Walter, 754  
 Literary Supplement, 367, 731  
 Litvinov, 423-4  
 Lockhart, Sir Rob, 671-2  
 Lohia, Dr. R. M., 424  
 Lok Sabha, 740, 770, 771, 797, 799, 800-1  
 Lothian, Lord, 492  
 Low, David, 368, 496, 505, 521, 601, 611, 615, 619, 623, tribute to, 726; controversy, 726  
 Low, Sir Francis, 540, 610, tribute to K. Srinivasan, 748  
 Lucknow Pact (1916), 460  
 Lunn, Rev. Dr. J. A., 80-1  
 Lytton, Lord, Viceroy, 16, 137  
 Macartney, C. G., 520  
 McCardie, Justice, 332, 333  
 MacDonald, Ramsay, 327, 328, 329, 352, 376, 395, 398, 404, 407-10, 417, 431, 449  
 Macfadyen and Co., 177, 178  
 Mackinley, Major, 153  
 Macmillan, H., 658  
 McMahon Line, 758  
 Madhava Rao, Lady, 57  
 Madhava Rao, Raja Sir T., 2, 47, 54, 56-7  
 Madhava Rao, V. P., 147, 155  
 Madock, Col., 320, 321, 322  
 Madras, visit of Prince of Wales, a hilarious sally, 62-4, Norton's uncomplimentary remarks, 66, Lajpat Rai's arrest, public opinion in, 170-1, Emden shells, 227-8, Gandhi's first visit to, 228-9, Tagore's visit, 242, food riots in, 242-3, Satyagraha day, 251-2; Simon Commission boycott, disturbances, 354, 358, Geography of, 426-7, election result, 466, war evacuation, 561-8, bus travel, war time ordeals, 584, Jinnah on, 599, 715, 721, anti-Hindi riots, 722, war evacuation, K. Srinivasan's plan, 750; 805  
 Madras Christian College, 202, 242, 426, 609  
 Madras Labour Union, 316  
 Madras Mahajana Sabha, formed in the premises of *The Hindu*, 2; Lord Elgin incident, 97-8, elects G. Subramania Aiyer to give evidence before Lord Welby's Commission, 104, 149, 163, 182  
 Madras Mail, 2-3, 63, 85, 86, 97-8, 108, 115, 119, 120, 145, 154, 214, 215-6, 221-2, 232, 239, 348, 370, 517, 520, 733  
 Madras Native Association, 2  
 Madras Railway and Co., 82  
 Madras Standard (See also *New India*), 130, 154  
 Madras Times, 2-3, 81, 110, 114, 115, 120, 154, 155, 202  
 Madrassee, 1-2  
 Madrassis, and Bengalis, 60-1; advice to go North, 378, Caine on, 461  
 Madurai Teachers' Association, 201  
 Magistrate, Gudur incident, 559, Punjab incident, 724  
 Magna Carta, 189  
 Mahadeva Aiyer, T. R., 337  
 Mahalanobis, Prof., 711  
 Maharaja Girls College, Trivandrum, 87  
 Maharaja of Bobbili, 193  
 Maharaja of Cochin, 46, 484  
 Maharaja of Coosimbazar, 233  
 Maharaja of Dharbanga, 229, 230  
 Maharaja of Indore, 335, 368  
 Maharaja of Kashmir, 157-8, 396, 670  
 Maharaja of Mysore, 46, 52  
 Maharaja of Travancore, 46, 484, 486, 487, 488, 661-2  
 Maharaja of Vizianagaram, patron, 6; 46-7, 62, 63, death, 128  
 Maharani of Cozzimbazaar, 6  
 Maharashtra, 718, 792, 793, 808  
 Mahatma: See Gandhi, M. K.  
 Mahatmas of Theosophy, 205, 206, 219  
 Mahratta of Poona, 71, 153, 187, 236



- Maine, Sir Henry, 57  
 Makin, William James, 457  
 Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan, 229, 232, 354, 444  
 Mallayya, Dr B S, 371  
 Malik, Ajit Singh (India), 756  
 Malik Charles (Lebanon), 756  
 Malik, Yakov (Russia), 756  
 Mammen Mappillai, 488, 489  
 Manchester Guardian, 112, 113, 283, 297, 298, 366, 369, 374, 472, 493, 496, 504, 520, 593, 594, 658, 726, 743, 785, 810  
 Mandal, J N, 625-6  
 Manickam Pillai, Dr, 12  
 Manicktollah bomb case, 66  
 Manmad Railway Junction, incident, 241  
 Marina Beach, lighting, 24-5, committing nuisance, 84; 147, Loop Railway Scheme, 157, 218, 252  
 Marjoribanks, Sir Norman, 159, 369  
 Marleybone Cricket Club, 87  
 Marriage Association, Madras, 71  
 Marriages, Hindu system, 55, raising age of, 67-75, polygamy, 122, Age of Consent Bill, 127, of G.S Arundale, 220-2, 317; child, abolition of, 67-75, 122, 134, 784, widow remarriage, 67-75, 122, 134  
 Martial Law, 253, 255, 316, 415  
 Martin, Kingsley, 767  
 Marxist, 704, 707  
 Mary, Queen, 195  
 Masters, 14  
 Matrimonial advertisements, 725-6  
 Matters, Leonard W., 430, 464, 487, 506, in charge of London office, 520; 525, 635, 673, 679, passes away, tribute, 732; 757  
 Max Mueller, Prof., scheme for child widows and comment on, 68-70  
 Maxwell, Sir Reginald, 552  
 Mayo, Miss, 366, 377, 378  
 Measures (Police Supdt), 411  
 Medicine, Indian, 560  
 Meerut Trial, 373  
 Mehta, Dr Dinshaw, 598  
 Mehta, Sir P.M., 142, 174, 189, 680  
 Mehta, Dr. Sumant, 386  
 Mendes-France, M., 722  
 Menon, K.P.S., 236  
 Menon, V.P., 646  
 Menzee, Roderich, 520  
 Merrill, John C., praises *The Hindu*, 785  
 Mesopotamian report, 293  
 Meston award, 318  
 Methodist Recorder, 80-1  
 Metternich, Prince, 423  
 Mill, reforms, 673  
 Miller, Harry, questionnaire to G.B. Shaw, K. Srinivasan's appreciation, 635  
 Miller, Rev. Dr., 26, 426  
 Mills, Herbert, 120  
 Mills, Col. Herbert James, 120  
 Ministers and Ministries, headed by Raja of Panagal, 304-5; Congress, under Rajaji, 430; acceptance by Congress, controversy, 467-74; Madras, First Congress, 474, 476-7, 479, 482, 483, 491, 503, 511, 513, 540, 549, 621, Suhrawardhy, 626, 643, 644, 671, 674, 688, 694-5, Congress in Madras, 695-6, 704, 712, 715, 721, 722, 746, 751, 762, 765, 766, D M K in Madras, 766-7, Mrs Gandhi's, 770, 789  
 Minorities, 339, 350, 363, 364, 398, 399, 404, 407, 408, 449, 460, 472, 509, 510, 512, 513, 515, 518, 532, 533, 536, 540, 566, 568, 573, 576, 595, 606, 612, 613, 617, 622, 644, 648, 650, 653, 664, 665, 668, 669, 680, 684, 699, 713, 807  
 Minto, Lord, Viceroy, 140, 186, 190-1, 193, 304  
 Minto-Morley Reforms See Constitutional Reforms  
 Mira Ben (Miss Slade), 401, 412, 413, 580  
 Miracles, 379-80, 421-2  
 Mitra, Rajendra Lal, 38  
 Moderates (See also "Liberals"), 171-4, 176, 189, 233, 235, 245-9, 261, 262, 264, Conference, 267-8, *The Hindu* on, 274-5; 278, 298, 302, 308, 317, 325, 326, 329, 330, 348, 349, 351, 383, 415, 417  
 Mody, H P, 588  
 Moffat, Prof., 202  
 Molotov, 505  
 Monkey menace, incident in Punjab, 724  
 Montagu, Edwin, 212, 213, 215, 216, 233, 236, 255, 258, 274, 286, 293, 330, 349, 404, 527, 554, 593  
 Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, 232, 233, 245-9, 251, 255, 260, 261, 293-4, 370, 408, 454  
 Moon, landing See Space  
 Moonjee (Liberal), 397  
 Moore, Col., 63  
 Moplahs, train tragedy of riot prisoners, rebellion, 288-90  
 Morley, John, 140, 171, 186, 189, 191, 192, 193, 199, 594  
 Morning Post, 328, 415  
 Morya, Mahatma, 206  
 Motor cars, in Madras, 158-9  
 Mountbatten, Lord, Viceroy, 16, 632, 641, swearing in as Viceroy, incident, 646-7, 651, 654, first Governor-General of Free India, 657-8, and the Princes, tribute, 662-3; 674, farewell tribute, 681-2; 684, and K. Srinivasan, 746  
 Mowrer, Edgar Ansel, 496  
 Muddiman, Sir Alexander, 336  
 Mumtaz Begum case, 335  
 Munich conference, 495  
 Munroe, Sir Thomas, 3, 34  
 Munshi, Chakranti, 331  
 Murali, N., General Manager, 788  
 Murder, in Guntakal, 85-6; in a Bengal village, 152; 187, 229, 258, 335  
 Murugesu Mudaliar, P.R., Chief Sports Reporter, death, tribute, 456-7  
 Music, 377, 379, 497-9, controversy, 558; 752  
 Music Academy, and K. Srinivasan, 752, and G. Narasimhan, 788

- Muslim League, All-India, 190, 213, 233, 363, 480, 481, 492, 509, 512-4, 528, 530-6, 546-8, 550, 568-72, 574, 576-7, 583, 590, 596-8, 605-7, 611-2, 615-22, "Direct Action Day", 623, 625-9, 634, 640-4, 646, 648-53, 655-8, 664, 668, 680
- Muslims, support for *The Hindu*, 6-7, 95, 99-100, 118, 145, 148, 189, concessions to, 190-1; separate electorates for, 192; 212, 350, 356, 359, 362-3, 373, 381, 394, 397, 398, 404, 409, 459, 460, 480-2, 492, 512-5, 527, 528, 530, 532-6, 540, 546-7, 550, 566, 569-71, 573, 576, 577, 583, 588, 596-7, 605-7, 612, 615-7, 621-3, 626, 634, 635, 643-4, 648-53, 655, 657, 666-70, 679-80, 684, 687-8, Congress, 621; Nationalists, 621
- Mussolini, 475, 495, 680
- Muthuranga Mudaliar, C.N., 434
- Muthuswami Aiyer, Sir T., appointment as Judge of Madras H.C., criticised, 1, 2; 57, 62
- Mylapore, 427
- Mylapore Permanent Fund, 180
- Mysore Representative Assembly, review of proceedings, 375-6
- Nagaraja Sarma, Dr R., tribute to S. Rangaswami, 347, 497, 557
- Nagasaki, 609
- Nageswara Rao, K., 434
- Naidu, C.K., 520
- Nair, Dr. T.M., 163, 192-4, 208, 231, 232
- Nambiar, A.C.N., 428-9
- Nambiar, Rym., 163
- Namboodripad, Kuroor Nilakanta, 334
- Nanda, Gulzarilal, 761
- Nanjunda Rao, Dr M.C., 205-6, 211, 307
- Naokhali, riots, 626; 634, 644, 649
- Naoroji, Dadhabhai, 98, 103, 129, 137, 232, 680
- Napier, C.F., 177
- Narasimha Aiyer, B.V., 241, addresses Madras Legislative Council in Tamil, controversy, 262-3
- Narasimha Iyengar, 454
- Narasimha Iyengar, M.R., 163
- Narasimhan, G., Manager, 525-6; Managing Editor, 753; 777, Padma Bhushan, 783, 787; passes away, 787; profile—early life, 787, General Manager, 787, Managing Editor and Chairman of Kasturi and Sons Ltd., 787, professional affiliations, 787, and the employees, 787, public activities, 787, Chanchal Sarkar on, 787, a great traveller, 787-8, lover and patron of music, 788, electronic gadgets and collections, 788, interest in education and horse racing, 788, and Billiards Association, 788, member, first Journalists' Wage Board, 788; tributes, 788; sons join the management, 788
- Narasimhan, V.K., 457, 521, 525, 602, 687, 688
- Narayan, J.P., 640, 655, 710, 798
- Narayan, R.K., art, 767-8
- Narayana Aiyer, Advertisement Manager, 526
- Narayana Guru, Swami, 334
- Narayana Sastri, T., 378
- Narayanachari, K., 779
- Narayanaiah, J., suit against Mrs. Besant, 207-8
- Narayanan, S., Secretary to K. Srinivasan, resignation incident, 746
- Narayanan, T.G., 603-4, arts on Indonesia and its leaders, 631-2
- Narendranath (Liberal), 397
- Natarajan, K., assists *The Hindu*, 6; Editor, Indian Social Reformer, 128; leaves *The Hindu*, 128, 132, 139, 303
- Natesan, G.A., 207, 322
- Nation (Journal), 756
- National Apex Body, 792
- National Demand, 340-1, 352, 363-4, 382, 399, 433, 443, 512, 567, 573, 575
- National Herald, 579, 739
- National Liberal Federation. See Moderates
- National Press. See *Hindu*, *The*
- Nationalisation 696-7, 703, 705-6, 708, 765
- Nationalism, 145-6, 163, 188, 225, 238, 242, 317, 350, 373, 374, 382, 398, 456, 460-1, 480-1, 523, 528, 645, 692, 714, 722, 736, 811
- Nationalist Agricultural Party, 466
- Nationalist Party, Indian, 172, 176, 284, 327, 329, 354, 372, 444
- Nationalists, 93, 101, 115, 122, 165, 173, 189, 209, 210, 217-8, 232, 264, V.S., Srinivasa Sastri on creed of, 268, 274, 327, 356, 363, 368, 373, 382-3, 394, 396, 403, 411, 433, 449, 451, 467, 481, 499, 525, 567, 600, 723, 731
- Native Public Opinion (Journal), 2
- Native States (See also Princely States), 99, 100, 299, 343, 504
- Natives, 182, 193, 241, 810
- Nautch girls and parties, 73-5, 134, 426
- Navy, Merchant, 555, ratings strike, 612-3
- Nawab Humayun Jah Bahadur, notable friend of *The Hindu*, 6
- Nawab Intezar Jung, 101
- Nawab of Banganapalle, 271
- Nawab Syed Mohamed, supports *The Hindu*, 6
- Nayar, Dr. Sushila, 580, 634
- Nazimuddin, Sir K., 591, 625
- Nedunchezian, V.R., 783
- Neelakantan, Reporter, 525
- Nehru, Indu (See also Indira Gandhi), 393
- Nehru, Jawaharlal, 196, 312, 352, 356-7, 361, 368, 393, 394, 411-2, 424-5, 461-5, 467, 470, 473-4, 479, 481, 487, 491, 501-3, 510, 512, 538, 539, 550, 552, 564-6, 570, 571, 575-6, 578, 608-9, 612, 614, 616-7, 619, 622-30, 632, incident at Rangoon airport, 632; 637-8, 640-2, 644, 646-7, 649, 654, 663, 665-7, 669-70, 672,

- 677-9, 689, 694, 699, 703-5, 707, 709, 716, 720-4, 731, 736-8, tributes to *The Hindu*, 738-40; in Washington, dispatch, 756-7; passes away, tribute, 758-60; 762, 778, 784
- Nehru, Kamala, 393, 419, 464
- Nehru, Krishna (See also Huthie Singh, Krishna), 393
- Nehru, Pandit Motilal, 196, 280, 294, 322-6, 329, 331, 339, 358, 372, 373, 391-4, death, tribute, 399-400, 443, 451-3, 542
- Nehru (Motilal) Committee Report, 353-63, 376, 417
- Netaji: See Bose, Subhas Chandra
- New India (Madras Standard), 209-10, 218, 220-3, 230, 236-7, 521, 525, 727
- New Statesman, 767
- New year honours list, 585
- New York Herald Tribune, 666
- Newman, E.M., 368
- News, change over to page one, 746
- News Chronicle, 520
- News Editor, 525, 728, 743, 745, first, 753
- Newspapers, 783, *The Hindu* among the world's 10 best, 784-5, 795, readership survey, 809; 810-11
- Newspapers, Anglo-Indian, 1, 5, 119-20, 171, 216
- Newspapers, Foreign, 160, 524, 754, 785
- Newspapers, Indian, 1, 5, 119-20, 124-25, 132, 148, 153, nationalist, 236; export of, 237; 239, 328, 456, 464-5, 518, 523-4, suspend publication for a day, 585-6; Patna paper, Gandhi unhappy on report, 647; 737-9, 747, 750, 785, 795, readership survey, 809
- Newspapers Act, 186
- Newsprint, shortage, 735, 737, 785, 796
- Nicholson, Surgeon Major, 4
- Nicholson, Lt.-Col. Ralph, 428
- Nihal Singh, St.: See St. Nihal Singh
- Nijalingappa, S., 770
- Nirody, B.S., 425
- Nisbet, Col. Pary, 158
- Nishtar, Abdul Rab, 616-7,
- Nissar, Mahomed, incorrect news of death, 457-8
- Nityananda, J.V., 207
- Nivedita, Sister, 378
- Nizam of Hyderabad, 100, bans *The Hindu*, 299-300; *The Hindu's* criticism, 300-1; Raja Bahadur incident, 301; removes ban, 301; 344, 662-3, loan to Pakistan, 684; 685-8
- "No Changers", controversy with the Swarajists, 322-3; 324, 342, 349, 380
- Non-alignment, policy, 772, 783
- Non-Brahmins, 192, 214, movement, 231-2, 317-8, 337-8; 276, 310, 331, Tamil Gurukula Vidyalyaya controversy, 337; 341, 531, 545-6, in Madras, 599
- Non-co-operation, programme, 141, 209, 222, 245, Gandhi and, 264; Congress accepts, 265; 274-5, 278-9, 281, 283-6, 288, 297-9, 302, 317, 322-3, 325, 348, 353, 360, 386, 435, 542, 595-6, 637, 759
- Non-violence, 222, 224, 254, 280, 285, 297, 298, 303, 317, 356, 360, 383-5, 387, 389, 412, 439, 440, 445-7, 486, 488-9, 507-8, 535, 538, 540-1, 544, 553, 575, 591, 612, 690, 696, 715, 730, 743
- No-rent campaign, 412
- Nordge, Sergeant, 241
- Northcliffe, 746
- North-West Frontier Province, 359, 449, 479, 507, 626, 629, 653, 655, 664, 667, 669, 671
- Norton, Eardley (See also "Sentinel"), Park fire tragedy enquiry, 26, enters the columns of *The Hindu*, remarks about Indians, protests, files defamation against *The Hindu*, 58-60; as a politician, involved in adultery suit, political career ends, 64-5, elected to Corporation of Madras, 65, and dissolution of partnership between G. Subramania Aiyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar, 65-6, Manicktollah bomb case, 66; about Madras, 66, *The Hindu's* criticism of, 66, leaves India, interview, 66; 94, 128-9, 179, 187
- No-tax campaign, in Bardoli, 285, 435, 440
- Nuclear, China explodes, 771, 773
- Numerals, 718, 721
- Nuremburg Trial, 635-6
- Obituaries, 84
- Occult Review, 428
- O'Connor, T.P., 335
- O'Dwyer, Sir Michael, 253, 255, 258-9, 332-3
- Olcott, Col., 204-5
- Oldfield, Dr. Josiah, 343
- Oliver, Lord, 327, 349
- Opposition, 700, 701, 736-8, 758, 763-6, 769, 785, 789, 797-8
- Orr David and Brightwell, Messrs., 177
- P. Orr and Sons, 82
- P.S. High School, and G. Narasimhan, 788
- Padma Bhushan, to K. Srinivasan, 749; to G. Narasimhan, 783, 787
- Padmanabha Iyengar, 188
- Padmanabha Rao, 778
- Padmanabhan, B.S., 778
- Pakistan, 492, 532-4, 536, 546-7, 549-50, 568-71, 576-7, 583, 597-9, 607, 611, 614-6, 618-9, 622-3, 626, 644, 647, 649-53, 655-9, 664, 666-72, 679, 682-4, 688, 753, 758, 760-2, 774
- Pal, Bepin Chandra, Correspondent, on the birth of *The Hindu*, 7-8; 137, 188, 218, 251, 325
- Palayamcottah, hartal, disturbances and shooting, 188
- Palghat, S.K. Chettur's incident, 498-9
- Pall Mall Gazette, 96
- Pant, G.B., 356, 445, 502
- Pariahs: See Harijans
- Parker, Judge, Salem riots case, 12-3

- Parliament, British, 23, 30, 32, 80, 98, 135-7, 140, 166, 167, 170, 192, 200, 219, 255, 275, 351, 356, 360, 395, 416, 418, 423, 432, 433, 448, 554-5, 567, 582, 590, 594, 620, 630, 654, 656, 658, 659
- Parliament (Free India's), 698-9, 705, 713, 717-8, 721, 736, 764, 769, 770-1, "Parliament Gallery", 778, 796
- Parliamentary, system, 192, nationalism, 316; democracy, 806
- Parthasarathy, G., 525
- Parthasarathy, S., (R.P.), 520
- Parthasarathy, S., (S.P.), editorial writer, 525; writes on Kashmir question, 683, Editor, profile, 753
- Parthasarathy, Srinivasan, Publisher, 753; passes away, tribute, 781
- Parthasarathy Chetty, 83
- Parthasarathy Naidu, M.N., Manager, retires, 525-6
- Partition, 480, 569, 571-2, 596-7, 635, 643-4, 648, 650-1, 653-5, 659-60, 662, 664-5, 669, 681, 684, 690-1, 712, 759
- Passive resistance movement, 183-4, 212, 214, 229, 317
- Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai, 383, 385, 412, 445, 462, 542, 612, 614, 616-7, 628, 641, 676-7, 683, passes away, tribute, 689-90, 694, 731, 750
- Patel, V.J., 219, 293-4, 326, 331, 372, 373, 435, 441, 452-3
- Pathan State, 653, 655-6
- "Patriotic Association", 101
- Pattabhiram, M., 778
- Pattabhirama Aiyer, C.R., 163
- "Pattini Nambir", 434-5
- Pavalur, T.K., 379
- Peal Adam, H., 423
- Pears (Times of India), 174
- Pearson, Drew, 600
- Pentland, Lord, 210, 217, 223, 239, 258, 263
- People's Friend (Journal), 2, 104
- People's Park, fire accident, 25-7, revived, 27
- Pethick-Lawrence, Lord, 610, 613, thumb-nail sketch, 616, 619, 643
- Pettit, Sir D., 331
- Phatak, Dr V.D., 321
- Philip, Prince, wedding, 674
- Phillips, William, affairs of, 599-601; 602
- Pickthall, 331
- Pillai, William, 139
- Pioneer (Lucknow), 43, 44, 97, 115, 117, 120, 121, 139, 157, 394
- Plagiarism, 120, 164, 291
- Plague, 108, 112, 114, 119
- Planning, 703, 705, 711-2, 740, 789, 803
- Planning Commission, 702, 704, 711-2
- Plans, 708, 710-1, 738, First Five Year, 708; Second Five Year, 708, 712, Third Five Year, 712, Fifth Five Year, 792
- Platten, Rev. T.G., 609
- Plebiscite, 596, 682-3, 684
- Polak, H.S.L., 235
- Police excesses, 356, 400, 413-6, 429, 520, Portuguese, 723
- Police Firing See Shooting
- Political, agitation, 165-6; 168, 187, 254, 315, 710, 723, 763
- Political Conference, North Arcot District, 141, Tirunelveli (Madras), 267, 523, Vizagapatam, 140
- Political Department of the Government of India, allegations, 626-7
- Political Parties, 723, 735, 738, 740, 764, 770
- Political prisoners, 284-5, 391, 401, 413, supply of buttermilk to, 414-5, 434, 444, 482-3, 487, 539, 551-2, 596, 609
- Political reforms (See also Constitutional reforms), 78, 98, 133, 147, 215, 232, 247, 250, 594
- Political situation, 169-71, nationalism spreads to South also, 188, 199, 210, 214, 236, 261, 297, 331, 418, 435, 459, 483, in Travancore, 484-91; 492, 503-4, 514-5, 541, 557, 568, 590, 593, 594, 601, 611, 621-2, 628, G.B. Shaw's replies to questions on, 635, 668, 764, 767, 790, 808
- Poona murder case, 107-8, 112, 119
- Poona Pact, 419, 540-1, 543-4, 548, 552
- Porter, William, Town Hall in Kumbakonam named after him, sp., 32-4
- Portugal, possessions, liberation, 672, 722, 723
- Postmen's Conference, All-India, 370
- Poverty, 105-6, 342, 442, 484, 793, 801, 802-3
- Powell, E.B., 179
- Praja Socialist Party, 704
- Prasad, Sir Jagadish, 550
- Prasad, Rajendra, 441, 503, 511-2, 535, 542, 630, 650, tribute to K. Srinivasan, 742
- Press, 233, 256, 311, 518, Advisory system, 747, censorship, 538, 539-40, 578-80, 585-6, 664, 789, 796, 799; freedom, 124, 156, 256, 356, 485, 578, 580, 697, 699, 700, 736-8, 784, 795-6; role of, 155, 518-9, 735-6
- Press, Anglo-Indian, 17, 29, 37, 47, 108, 112, 115, 117-9, 121, 122-3, 124, 145, 170-1, 213-4, 239, 254, 348
- Press, Bengali, 117
- Press, British, 23, 110, 117, 123-4, 137, 148-9, 151, 236, 275, 302, 329, 366, 411, 495, 512, 615, 700, 767, 786
- Press, Foreign, 203, 227, 428, 608, 667-8, 688, in U.S., 754-5
- Press, German, 237
- Press, Indian, 16, 44, 68, 70, 90, 108, 115, 117-9, 123, a review by The Times, stats., 124-5; 133, Gag Act, 137; 138, 148, 169, 182, 186, 203, 223, 236-7, 255, 289, 302, 308, 388, 421, 428, 456, 512, 562, 579, 580, 608, 632, 667-8, 675, 688, 735-6, 737-9, 747-9, 776, 784, ordinances—388, to prevent the publication of objectionable matters,

- 794-5, Parliamentary Proceedings (Protection of publication) Repeal Ordinance, 795-6
- Press, Nationalist, 388, 735, 736-7, 747, 750, 784
- Press, Native, 46, 50, 86, 115, 117-9, 123, 125, 152, 182
- Press, Vernacular, 116-8, 388, 421
- Press Act, Indian, 210, 214, 217, 256, 257, 317, 388, 413, 456
- Press Adviser, 525, 539, 585
- Press Advisory Committee, Central, 540
- Press Commission, Indian, 738
- Press Council, 796
- Press Foundation of India, G. Narasimhan, Director, 787
- Press Institute, International, elects K. Srinivasan as Vice-President, 750-1; G. Narasimhan, Chairman, 787
- Press Institute of India, G. Narasimhan, President, 787
- Press Trust of India, and K. Srinivasan, 750
- Pressmen. See Journalists
- Price, Sir Frederick, 63
- Prices, 704, 712, 766, 785, 791, 792, 804
- Prince of Arcot, 192
- Prince of Wales (King Edward VIII), 279-81, 282-3, 542
- Prince of Wales (King George V). See also George V, King, 180-1, 195
- Prince of Wales (Prince Albert Victor), 52-3, 62-4, 387
- Princely States (See also Native States), 299, 343, 410, 432, Travancore, 484-91, 531, 636, 662-3, 690
- Princes, 99-100, 138, 158, 197, 229-30, 344, 345, and their future, report, 374-5, 394, 396, 404, 410, 479, 480, 484-5, 489, 491-3, 503-5, 509, 531-2, 561, 600, 637-8, 660, 662, 688, 690-1
- Printing machines, 368, 518
- Prisons, 392, 394, 411, 413, 420, 439, 538-9, 544
- Private Sector, 703-6, 708-10, 712, 729, 737-8, 765, 781, 803, 805
- Privy Purse, 688
- Production and Productivity, 694, 696, 704-6, 710, 712, 792-3, 802-4
- Prohibition, 380, 391, 413, 422, 430, 503, 698
- Pronunciation, circular in Bengal, 159; an incident in Madras, 159-60
- Property rights, 704-5, 709, 729
- Provinces, 618-9, 623, 629, 640, 643-4, 648-9, 652-4, 683, 691, 694, 715, 718-9, 736
- Provincialism, 712-3
- Public Safety Bill, 373-4
- Public Sector, 708, 709-10, 712, 738, 781, 803, 804-5
- Publication suspension, first, 734-5, second and third, 781-3
- Pudukottah, merges with Madras, 683
- Pulianthope trouble, 316
- Punjab, repression and troubles in, 122-3, 139-40, 170, 217, 245, 253, 255-6, 257-60, 269, 279, 293, 317, 348, 372, 460, 643-4, 648-9, 681
- Purandara Dasa, 497
- Qariyum, Sir Abdul, 409
- Queen, British, coronation of, 726
- Quit India, 548, 572-4, 587, 641-3, 648, 651-2, 672
- Racial discrimination, 85, 87, 135, 179, 190, 195, 199, 201, 240, 270-1, 278, 305, 312, 340, 460, 483, 581, 612, 784
- Racing, coverage a speciality, 520, and K. Srinivasan, 752; 779, and K. Gopalan, 786, and G. Narasimhan, 788
- Radhakrishnan, Dr. S., 534, 763
- Raghava Aiyer (Correspondent), advises Madras to go North, 378
- Raghunatha Aiyer, N., leader writer, 349-50, and Literary Supplement, 367; Assistant Editor, 369, tribute to A. Rangaswami Iyengar, 455, 457, 525, tribute to K. P. Viswanatha Aiyer, 727, retires, profile, 728-31, on K. Srinivasan, 743, 745
- Raghunatha Rao, Dewan Bahadur, 2, 70, 71, 97, 134, 154
- Raghunathan, C., false report of death, 560
- Raghunathdass, 70
- Railways, 102-3, 105, Madras Marina Loop Scheme, 157; latrine accommodation, 158, guide, 160; 660, vagaries of G. T. Express, 674-5, 710, 720
- Raja, M. C., 354
- Raja Bahadur incident, 301
- Raja of Bhinga, 41, 101
- Raja of Bobbili, 465
- Raja of Panagal, Ministry, no-confidence motion, 304-5, death, tribute, 370
- Raja of Pudukottah, 301
- Raja of Ramnad, 154
- Raja of Venkatagiri, 46
- Rajagopalachari, C., 184, 229-30, 238, 254, 287-8, 293-4, 296, 324, 342, 349, 380, 387, 418, 430, 438-9, 462, 467-8, 470-2, 474, 477, 511, 515, 525, 529-30, 533, 535-6, trial, 538; 542, 545, 549, 559, 561, 564-5, 568-71, resigns from Congress, 572, 582, formula, 596-9; 600, 622, and Gandhi and Kasturba Iyengar, 633, 647, forms Swatantra Party, 701-2; 715, 720, 729, 745, 750-1, 766
- Rajaji Hall, 517
- Rajan, Sir P. T., 465
- Rajendra Sinhu, Gen., 687-8
- Ram, N., 788
- Rama Rao, Dr. O., 208
- Rama Row, Samjee, 181-2
- Ramabhai, Pandit, 69
- Ramachandra Aiyer, A., 1, 2
- Ramachandra Aiyer, T. R., 163
- Ramachandra Rao, M., 418
- Ramakrishna Aiyer, [V] 525
- Ramamurthi, S. V., 604
- Raman, Sir C. V., 610
- Ramana Maharishi, 425, edl. on his death 730

- Ramanand Tirth, Swami, 687  
 Ramaswami, E. K., death, profile, 778  
 Ramaswami, K. S., 522  
 Ramaswami, O. P., 414  
 Ramaswami Aiyer, Sir C. P., 132, 313, 366-7, 378, on non-co-operation, 266; brushes with *The Hindu*, 266, 309, clash with *The Hindu* 484-91; 531, 597, 636-7, 645-6, 660-1, 662, 688, 753  
 Ramaswami Mudaliar, Sir A., civic address to Simon Commission, controversy, 358-9; election controversy, 447  
 Ramaswami Naicker, E. V., 333, 337, 379, 545-6, 598, 599  
 Ramaswami Sastri, K. S., 557  
 Ramaswami Sastri, V. S., 365, 369, 457, retires, death, tribute, 524-5, 728  
 Ramaswamy Iyer, S., 206  
 Ramesham, Justice V., 336  
 Ramulu, A. S., 220  
 Ranade, Justice, Mahadev Govind, 70, 121, passes away, 150, 452  
 Rand, murder of, 107, 112  
 Rangachari, Dr. S., 441  
 Rangachariar, P. V., one of the founders, 1  
 Rangachariar, T., 143, and Kasturiranga Iyengar, partner, 163-4  
 Rangachariar, T. T., one of the founders, 1  
 Rangacharya, V., 428  
 Ranganatha Mudaliar, A., 371  
 Rangarajan, S., Deputy Editor, 522  
 Rangarajan, S., Printer and Publisher, 786  
 Rangaswami, K., 634, 671-2, 745, 778  
 Rangaswami, S., Asst. Editor, war reviews, 226, Editor, 320, passes away, tributes, memoir, his edils and writings, 346-9, National Hockey Championship, cup in his memory, 349, 728-9, 742  
 Rangaswami Iyengar, A., Assistant Editor and Manager, 164, Printer and Publisher, 184, leaves, 203, Montagu's remarks about Kasturiranga Iyengar, letter to him, 258; C. Karunakara Menon's death, tribute, 304; 310, 325-6, 331, 352, back as Editor, 369; 370, 392, delegate to the Second R.T.C., 403, 417, passes away, tributes, memoir, 451-6, his address on the Press, 456; 457, 520, 522, 525, 728, 742, declines knighthood, 749  
 Rangiah Naidu, P., 154  
 Rangoon Airport, incident at, 632  
 Rani of Jhansi Regiment, 604  
 Ranjit Singhji, Prince Kumar Shri, and Cricket, 87-9  
 Rao, Dr. D. S. R., 203  
 Rao, R. L., 521  
 Rashtriya Swayam Sevak (R.S.S.), 805  
 Ravi, N., 788  
 Razakars, 684-5, 686, 687-8  
 Razvi, Kasim, 684, 687-8  
 Readership, 82, survey, 732; *The Hindu* ranks high, 809  
 Reading, Lord, Viceroy, 275, 278, 280-1, 325-6, 341, 349, 542, 658  
 Reddi, Sir K. V., tribute to Kasturiranga Iyengar, 313  
 Reddy, Dr. C. R., 22, 284-5, 304-5, tribute to Kasturiranga Iyengar, 312; tribute to S. Rangaswami, 347-8; on *The Hindu*, 367; resignation story, 467  
 Reddy, G. K., 778  
 Reed, Sir Stanley, 131, 202  
 Rees (British Resident in Trivandrum), 87  
 Reforms (See also Constitutional reforms, Political reforms, Social reforms), 232, 235, 304, 318, 394, 460-1, 673  
 Reforms Act, 267, 294, 449, 468, 471-3, 599  
 Reforms Enquiry Committee, report, 336  
 Refugees, 626, 634, 664-5, 668, 758, 774  
 Religion, "True Religion", 78, 106, 190, 332, 343, 379, 420, 478, 482, 527-8, feature on, 779, and K. Gopalan, 786  
 Reporters and reporting, 22, 369, 456, 525, 585, 608, 727, 731-2, 744, 757, 778, new scheme, 780  
 Republic of India, 697, 699, 764  
 Reston, James, 779  
 Reuter, 119-20, 123, 164, 202, 238, 262, a bloomer, 301-2, Cawnpore conspiracy case, 302-3, 328-9, 380-1, 408-9, 411, 429, 468, 476, 495, 507, 520, 522, 628, 750  
 Revolution and Revolutionaries, 218-9, 247, 253, 262, 298, 302, 327-8, 548, 655  
 Revolutionary Party, 604  
 Reynolds, Reginald, 383  
 Ribbentrop, 505, 635  
 Rickford, Captain, 97  
 Riots, Salem, 11-2; food, 242, 254, 280, Moplah, 288; Cawnpore, Hindu-Muslim, 405; Muslim League's "Direct Action Day", 623; in E. Bengal (Naokhali), 626; in Punjab, 644; in Bihar, 647, 665, 667, anti-Hindi, 722, 768  
 Ripon, Lord, Viceroy, 13, 16, 17-21, 29-30, 33-4, 94, 123, 129, 136-7, 191  
 Rockefeller, David, 784  
 Romilly, George, 3  
 Roosevelt, President F.D., 554-5, 565-6, 599, 600-1, death, tribute, 602, 754-5, 773  
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 754  
 Rope trick, Indian, 428  
 Ross, Sir Eric Dennison, 428  
 Round Table Conference, 284, 326-7, 340, 353, 382-3, 391-2, 424, 447, 449, 512, small, 574; First, 394-8, 449, 681, 691, Second, 401-2, 404, 407-9, 410, 416-8, 453, 542, 578, Third, 418, 431, 433  
 Rowlatt, Sir James, 251  
 Rowlatt Act, 217-8, 250-1, 255, 405, 460, 633  
 Roy, Dr. B. C., 442  
 Roy, K. C., 422  
 Roy, M. N., Cawnpore conspiracy case, 302-3; 477-8, 544-5, 599  
 Royal Asiatic Society, 107

- Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, 104-5, 108
- Rukmani Neelakanta Sastri (Mrs Arundale), 222
- Russia, 14, 16, 44, 49-50, 82, 118, 160, 170, 226, 251, 368, 424, 462, 475
- S V V. See Vijayaraghavachariar, S V "Sabari", 425
- Sachidananda Sinha, S, 131
- Sadasiva Aiyer, Justice, 207, 220
- Sagar, Easwar, 757, 779, 783, 784
- Sahni, J N, on K Srinivasan, 747-8
- Sai Samaj, All-India, 262
- St. James Gazette, 87
- St Nihal Singh, contributor to, 291; art "Hyderabad Today", ban on *The Hindu*, 299-301; world scoop message, 327-9; arts on Imperial race, 335
- Salar Jung, Sir, special art. to, 100-1
- Salem riots, 11, 12-3, 24
- Salivatswaran, 390, 412, 429, 438, 481, 500-1, Correspondent, profile, 522, 546
- Salt Satyagraha, 224, Dandi March, 383-7, 390, 634, 728, Dharsana Salt Works, 389; Vedaranyam, 387-8
- Salt Tax, 129, 391, 401, 424
- Sambamoorthy, P, 379
- Samuel, Lord, 492, 589
- Samyukta Socialists, 771
- San Francisco Conference, formation of U N, 603
- Sandhurst, Lord, 112, 113, 119
- Sanjiva Reddi, N, 768, 769-70
- Sankaran Nair, Sir C, 61, controversy, 77; Director, 154, and Kasturiranga Iyengar, partner, 163-4; 193, 209, 257, 275, parts company with *The Hindu*, clash with Gandhi, 284; libel case, 322-3; 355, 359
- Sanskrit, 204, 719
- Sapru, Sir Tej Bahadur, 132, 232, 362, 392-3, 399, 400-1, 408, 416-7, 419, 431, 447, 522, 542, 545-7, 549-50, 554, 556, 563-5, 574, 576, 588, 600
- Sarda Act, 427
- Sarkar, Chanchal, on G Narasimhan, 787
- Sarkar, N R, 588
- Sarma, B. N., 218
- Sarma, Dr D S, 381
- Sarma, M. S. M., 441-2
- Sarojini Naidu, 287, 297, 386, 389-90, 436
- Satyagraha and Satyagrahis, 184, 224, 251-4, 333-4, 383-4, 386-9, 400, 403, 410, 413-5, 440, 465, 520, 537, 539-40, 543-5, 547-8, 551-3, 559, 596, 633, 690, 723
- Satyamurthi, S, 72, 261, 291, tribute to Kasturiranga Iyengar, 312; 331, 359, 360, 371, 447, tribute to A. Rangaswami Iyengar, 451; 474, 542, 557, passes away, tributes, 594-5
- Satyanarayana, Burra, 359
- Satyapal, Dr, 253
- Scandals, in Grant Duff's regime, 11-2, 14
- Scheduled caste, 545-6, 620, 625-6
- Schuster, Sir George, 372, 401
- Science and Engineering Technology, page, 779
- Science and Technology, 802-4
- Scoops, 327, 336, 522, 610, 731, 780
- Scott, C P, 743, 810
- Scottish Press, early editions of *The Hindu* printed at, 4
- Secession, 337, 571, 596, 619, 652
- Sedition, 66, 109-11, 119, 141-2, 171, 187, 198, 250, 372, 394, 477
- Self-determination, 322, 327, 340, 531, 536, 547, 571, 583, 596-7, 630, 650, 680
- Self-government, 17, 20, 34, 172-3, 232, 236, 246-7, 252, 255, 275, 294, 299, 326, 329, 375-6, 385, 396, 397, 399, 402, 404, 409-10, 420, 432, 440, 445, 448-50, 460, 468, 470, 484, 493, 508-11, 514, 546-8, 590, 601, 603, 609, 643, 658, 672, 689, 811
- Self-Respect movement, 379
- "Sentinel" (Olla Podrida) (See also Norton, Eardley), columnist of *The Hindu*, 54, about Sir T Madhava Rao, 57; identity revealed, 57-8, writings, 60-4
- Separation See Partition
- Separatist, 695, 713
- Servants, 158
- Servants of India Society, 276, 312, 671
- Services, demoralisation of, in Delhi Secretariat, 650, communal G O in, 695; 713, 810
- Sesha Iyengar, 163
- Sesha Iyengar, Rao Bahadur K V., tribute to A. Rangaswami Iyengar, 456
- Sesha Iyer, V, 74
- Seshagiri Aiyer, T V, 129, 153, 154
- Seshan, P. A., 778, 781
- Setalwad, Sir Chimanlal, 224
- Sethna, P. C., 331
- Setlur, S S, 111
- Shah Commission, 790, 806, 807
- Shah Nawaz, Begum, 629
- Shanmukham Chetti, Sir R K, tribute to Kasturiranga Iyengar, 312
- Sharma, P. D., 540
- Shastri, Lal Bahadur, 722, Prime Minister, 758, 760; death, tribute, 761-2
- Shaw, George Bernard, 426, 429, 516, 522, reply to questionnaire, 635; 639
- Shelvankar, K. S., 666, brief sketch, 757-8
- Shepherd, Justice, 153
- Sherwani, T. A. K., 411
- Shiva Rao, B, 316, 417, 467, 468, 470, 471-2, 474, 491-3, 503, 511, 513-5, profile, 521; 529-31, 534, 536, 539, 542-3, 549-50, 552, 554, 556, 562, 564-6, 569, 572, 581-3, 587, 593-4, 600, 601, 603, 610, 624, 679, 745, 750
- Shooting, at Palayamcottah and Tinnevely 188; in Delhi, 254; in Madras, 354; in Travancore, 486-7; 578, casualties, stats, 588; in Calcutta, 612, in Bombay, 612, in Andhra towns, 716

- Sikhs, 605, 620, 628, 644, 649, 650, 653, 670
- Simla Conference, 605, 607-8, 611
- Simon Commission, 351-9, 376, 378, 421, 590, 640, 643, Report, 391-2, 397, 408, 416-7, 448, 728
- Singaravelu Mudaliar, Cawnpore conspiracy case, 302-3
- Sinha, Lord, first Indian to the Viceroy's Council, 192-3, 269, 273
- Sinha, Dr. Satchidananda, 629
- Sinn Feiners, 264, 266
- Sircar (Sir Nripendra Nath), 470
- Sita, controversy, 557-8
- Sitaramayya, Dr Pattabhi, 499-500
- Siva Prasad, Raja, 41
- Sivapriyammal, 70, 143
- Sivaswami Aiyer, Sir P S, 153, 164, 267, tribute to Kasturiranga Iyengar, 313-4, 352, 392, 446, 537
- Skinner, E L, 200
- Slade, Miss: See Mira Ben
- Slocombe, George, 390-1
- Small scale industry, 709, 802-4
- Smoking, S K Chettur's incident, 498-9
- Social Reforms, 42, 54, 56, 67-79, 126-8, 131, 135, 146-7, 319, 337, 378, 694
- Socialism, 462, 696, 700-1, 704-9, 729, 739, Democratic, 765, Scientific, 765
- Socialists and Socialist Party, 445, 462, 467, 698, 704, 706, 709, 797
- Socio-economic policies, 705, 805, 809
- Soldiers, 78, incident in Guntakal, 85-6, 106, murder in Poona, 107-8, Gokhale's charge and apology, 111-2, 575, 581-2, 602-3, 677
- South Africa, 120, 183-4, 229, 253, 335, 377, 481
- South India Turf Club, G Narasimhan, President, 788
- South Indian Journalists' Federation, 729
- South Indian Railway Employees' Association, Tiruchi, and Kasturiranga Iyengar, 316
- Space, Russians launch first ship, 773, Americans land on Moon, 773-4
- Spencer, Herbert, 114
- Spencer and Co., 82
- Spinning, wheel or charkha, 287, compulsory, controversy, 323-4; 342, 384, 390, 445-6, 534, 538, 581
- Sport and Pastime*, 781
- Sports, 87, 456-7, page, 520, 779; and K. Gopalan, 786
- Sportstar The*, 781
- Srinivasa Iyengar, C R, 273, 425
- Srinivasa Iyengar, P T, 206
- Srinivasa Iyengar, S, 184, 267, 294, tribute to Kasturiranga Iyengar, 311; 318, 323, 325, 333, 342, 350, 351, 360, 361, 482, 541-2
- Srinivasa Iyengar, V V., 426
- Srinivasa Sastri, V S, 72, on Veeraraghava-chariar, 128, 144, 163, 183, 223, 232, 245, 247, 268, 275-8, 305, pen-picture of Kasturiranga Iyengar, offer of Editorship to, 309-11, 317, 329, 331, 339, 343-5, tribute to S Rangaswami, 348, 349, 376-7, 400, 401, 408, 417, 433, 446, 448, 478-9, 542-4, 554, 557-8, 561, 591, 597, passes away, tribute, 633, 728, 742
- Srinivasan, C R, tribute to A Rangaswami Iyengar, 453, 463, 523, 614
- Srinivasan, Kasturi, as Editor, 22; Printer and Publisher, 256, co-proprietor, 319; letter from his father, 319, Editor, 349, at the Fiftieth birthday function of *The Hindu*, 365-6, hands over Editorship, 369, 454, Managing Editor, 457, 470, 471, 474, on Sir C P's attitude towards *The Hindu*, 489-91; in London, talk with Lord Zetland, visits Nehru, letter to K. Gopalan, 491-2, returns, letters to and from Shiva Rao, on the political situation, 492-3, 514-5, moving to new premises, sentiments and problems, 517-8; portrait of, 518; Low's cartoons, Krupps threat, 521; offer to Shiva Rao, 521, letter of appreciation to A S K. Iyengar, 522, changes the crest, 523, 525, 529, concern about Nehru in prison, 539, AINEC meets for first time under his presidentship, 539; denies giving assurance to Government on war effort, P Conf, 540, denies Jinnah's allegations, 545; role in settlement of the political deadlock, 549-50, interview with Viceroy, Press censorship, AINEC meet, 580, AINEC's protest on Government's ban, 585-6, meets Gandhi, 589, and Satyamurthi, 594, Japanese surrender, scoop, glee, 610, appreciates Miller's effort, 635; and K. P. Viswanatha Aiyer, 727, 728; and N. Raghunatha Aiyer, 728, 730, 731, farewell letter to Vasudeva Aiyer, 732; agrees to front page news, 733; shock of the labour trouble, 735, and Nehru, 739, arrangement with National Herald, letter to Indira Gandhi, 739; passes away, tributes, 741-2; Profile-early life, 742, Printer and Publisher, Editor, Managing Editor, 742-3, makes *The Hindu* the complete newspaper in India, Guardian's tribute, 743, fashions *The Hindu* as a nonparty journal, 743, and Editorial writers, 743, and employees, 743-5, first to introduce weather chart and news in India, 745, starts an Index department, 745-6, social and personal column, 746, strict about the deadline, 746, affection and consideration for his Secretary, 746, surprise call by Kamaraj, 746, and Sir P. Thakurdas, 746, and Lord Mountbatten, 746, Wavell on, 746-7, President, Newspaper Editors' Conference, 747, an English writer in *The Statesman* on, 747, Prof. Bhansali episode, J. N. Sahn's tribute, 747-8, lays down office as President of AINEC, Devadas



- Gandhi's tribute, 748, Sir Francis Low and Ramnath Goenka's tributes, 748-9, and Chief Reporter Vasudeva Aiyer, 749, declines knighthood, 749, accepts Padma Bhushan, 749, wrath of Sir Arthur Hope, 749-50, and Congress, 750, and Gandhi, 750, and Editor of Justice, 750, fire in a newspaper office in G. T., offer, 750, flood, offer to newspapers, 750, evacuation of Madras City, plan to shift newspapers, 750, creates P. T. I., 750, Vice-President, I.P.I., 750, visits U.S.A., 751, and Commonwealth Press Union, 751, shuns personal publicity, and the Editor of Illustrated Weekly of India, 751, liberal contributions, 751, affection for N. S. Varadachari, 751, and A. G. Venkatachari, 751-2, and M. Bhaktavatsalam, 752, and Music Academy, a music lover, patron of Chess Association, 752, D. V. Gundappa on, epitaph, 752; 753, 781, 785-7
- Srinivasaraghava Iyengar, S., 76, 138, 163, 319, 347
- Sriramulu, Potti, 716-7
- Stalin, M., 618
- Standard, The, 96
- Starvation, 441, deaths in Bengal, 591-2, 645
- States and Governments, 480, 482, 618, 637-8, 641, 644, 646, 656, 657, 660, 662-3, 682, 691, 697, 715, 718, 720, 799, 800, 801, 809, integration of, 683-4, 689; reorganisation of, 713; States Re-organisation Commission, 718
- Statesman (Calcutta), 115, 121, 465, 592, on K. Srinivasan, 747
- Stine, Prof. Mohan, 331
- Strachey, Justice, 111
- Strike, by Naval ratings, 612-3; 710, in *The Hindu*, 734-5, 782-3; 763, 789, 805
- Students, 181, 201, 229, 230-1, 236, 249, 377, 403, 429, prank in a Bengal school, 496-7; 612
- Subba Rao, A., 128
- Subba Rao, K., assists *The Hindu*, 6; 57, 60, on differences between G. Subramania Aiyer and M. Veeraraghavachariar, 127-8; Director, Indian Social Reformer, 128; 132, 138, 303
- Subba Rao, N., 140
- Subba Rao, Saligram, 138
- Subba Rao, Khasa, 414
- Subba Rao Pantulu, N., one of the founders, 1; on the name of the paper, 139
- Subbaroyan, Dr. P., 353
- Sub-Editors, 744, 745, 753-4, 757, 761
- Subramania Aiyer, A.V., (A.V.S.), 522-3, 618, 744
- Subramania Aiyer, G., one of the founders, 1; co-proprietor, Editor, 1; 3, life, 4; 5, 6, 9, 11, moves the first resolution at the first session of INC., 35; 39, 59, partnership with Veeraraghavachariar breaks, leaves, 65, crusade against social evils of Hindu society, 67-8; re-marriage of his widowed daughter, marriage of second daughter, 70, wife's death, 70-1, 80, in London to give evidence before Royal Commission, made a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, 104-7, sp. on Indian Press, 115-7; seeks dissolution of partnership with Veeraraghavachariar, reasons for, 126-7, differences with Veeraraghavachariar, K. Subba Rao on, 127-8; Veeraraghavachariar's appeal to, 128; in Lord Ripon's diary, 129, differences and settlement with Veeraraghavachariar, TV Seshagiri Aiyer and Norton arbitrate, 129; starts Swadeshamitran, 130, Editor, Madras Standard, 130; starts and edits the United India, 130; files defamation suit against Veeraraghavachariar, 130, a giant in journalism, great social reformer, tributes, 131-2, on India and Indians, 133; on Hindu society, 133, call to the Indian Press, 133, on women, 134, crusade against child marriages and for remarriage of widows, 134, distaste for nautch girls, 134, on Harijans, 135, friendliness to Britons, 135, way of writings, 135-6, an inseparable part of INC., 136; his role in acquittal of the Collector of Madurai, 138, on Indian Princes, 138; strict disciplinarian, relationship with staff, 139; political metamorphosis, 139-40; supports proposal for boycott of British goods, 140-1; lecture tour of the South, 141; urges giving up titles and honorary offices, 141; arrest on charge of sedition, *The Hindu's* comment, 141-2; bail application dismissed, removed to the Penitentiary, case withdrawn, released, comment of *The Hindu*, 142-3; failing health, 143; eldest daughter passes away, 143; Subramania Bharati's tribute, 143-4; seriously ill, Gandhi calls on, 144, passes away, *The Hindu* mourns, 144-5; tributes, memoir, 145-7; sp. at Silver Jubilee of *The Hindu*, 147, 155; 148, defamation suit against, 153; 167, 182, 201, 204, 290, 303, 309, Veeraraghavachariar angry with, 310; arrest & release, 310; 312, *The Hindu's* tribute to, on its Fiftieth birthday, 365; 368, 454, 461, bronze bust of, 518
- Subramania Aiyer, K., 72
- Subramania Aiyer, Sir S., one of the chief benefactors of *The Hindu*, 4-5, 6; 60, 128, 163, 206, 215, 220, 257, 387, 554
- Subramania Bharati, 77, 143, 227, 290-1, 311, 334, 337
- Subramania Garu, V., 74
- Subramania Siva, 188
- Subscribers and subscriptions, 5, 82, 124-5, 456
- Suddhi (conversion) ceremony, 342-3
- Suhrawardhy, H.S., 626, 649, 651, 669

- Sukarno, President, 631-2  
 Sundaram, Dr. Lanka, 424  
 Sundaram Aiyer, P. R., 163  
 Sundararaman, Prof. K., 72  
 Sunday Edition, 525  
 Superstition, 78, 421-2  
 Supreme Court, 697, 698  
 Survey of Industry, 781  
 Swadeshamitran, 130, 141, 143, 203, 453, 454, 463, 523, 614  
 Swadeshi movement, 167-8, 169, 201, 281-2  
 Swaminatha Aiyer, M., 57  
 Swaraj, 144, 172, 224, 232, 280-1, 287-8, 293, 298, 325, national demand for, 326; 331, 343, 350, constitution, 351, 352; 355, 374, 382, Government, 405, 463, 406, 410, 412, 418, Purna, 440, 468, 448, 458, 462, 466, 493, 515, 519, 541, 547, 622, 689, 690, 697  
 Swaraj Party, 296, 297, 325, 442, 443, 451, 452, 455  
 Swarajists, 296, 304, 322-3, 324-6, 329, 340-1, 356, 443  
 Swarajya (Journal), 291, 296, 336  
 Swatantra Party, formation, 701-2, 765, 766, 771  
 Swati Thirunal Music Academy, Trivandrum, Centenary, 661  
  
 Tagore, Rabindranath, 241-2, 257, 380-1, 419, 425  
 Tamil, 144, 146, Madras Legislative Council, address in, controversy, 262-3  
 Tamil Gurukula Vidyalaya (Shermadevi), functioning, controversy, 337  
 Tamil Nadu Billiards Association, G. Narasimhan, President, 788  
 Tanjore, 74, 387, 388  
 Tarn Taran Mission (Punjab), 151  
 Tashkent Declaration, 761  
 Tata, J.N., death, tribute, 160-1  
 Tax, 91-2, 103, 124, 246, 329, 360, 617, 673, 709, 766  
 Taylor, Robert L., 784  
 Teachers, school boy's prank, edl. "The Cactus Touch", 496-7  
 Telegraph Copyright Bill, 120-1  
 Telengana, 718  
 Teleprinter, 761  
 Temple entry, 419-20, 426, 729  
 Temples, Mylapore, Trustee case, 83-4, Triplicane, tank, 427  
 Terrorists, activities in Bengal, 187, 325; 217, 243, 255, 258, 333, 411, 419  
 Thakurdas, Sir P., 326, 331, on K. Srinivasan, 746  
 Thampiran, Pakiri, 241  
 Thanu Pillai, Pattom, 485, 486  
 Theosophical Society, 207, 208, 220, 222  
 Theosophy and Theosophists, 134, 204-7, 212, 220, 224, 317  
 Thirumalachari, M., 154  
 Thorne, J. A., 387  
 Thornton, E.L., 74  
 Thyagaraja, Saint, Centenary of his death, 638-9  
 Thyagaraya Chetty, Sir, P., 214, 231, 337, death, tribute, 338, 370  
 Tilak, B.G., arrest, 107, 119; trial and conviction for sedition, release, 109-11, 172-5, 187, 219, 227, 247, 251, 262, passes away, tributes, 269-70, 309, 317, 680  
 Tilak Swaraj Fund, 388, 751  
 Tilden, W.T., 520  
 Times, The, 37, 68, 96, 112, 115, 117, 124, 131, 158, 178, 286, 302, 366, 411, tribute to A. Rangaswami Iyengar, 455, 493, 498, 518, 520, Trade and Engineering Supplement, Correspondent's tribute to *The Hindu*, 524, 733, 746, chooses *The Hindu* among the world's 10 best newspapers, description, 784-5; Correspondent's description of *The Hindu*, 785  
 Times of India, 115, 119-22, 131, 174, 202, 284, 337, 541, 544, 610, 748  
 Tinnevely, hartal, disturbances and shooting, 188-9  
 Titles, abolition of, 498, knighthood, declined, 749  
 Tolstoy, Leo, 78  
 Torture Commission, 2  
 Tottenham, Sir Richard, 539  
 Trade and Industry review, 368  
 Transfer of Power, 391, 509, 537, 548, 551, 563, 567, 576, 597, 613, 617, 620, 628, 641, 642, 645, 649, 653, 663, 681, 698, 735  
 Travancore, events in, 484-91; independent State, 645; 656, accedes, 660-2; 753  
 Travancore National and Quilon Bank, failure, 488-9; 490  
 Treaties, Srinivasa Sastri on, 343-5  
 Trees, strange incidents, 421-2  
 Trials, Manicktollah bomb case, 66; Hampanna murder, 85-6; Tilak for sedition, 109-11, 187, of Sir George Arbuthnot, 179, of Aurobindo, 187; of V.O.C. and others, 188; Jackson, 270-1; Gandhi, 286-7; Sankaran Nair for libel, 332-3, Mumtaz Begum case, 335; Meerut, 373; Nehru, 393-4; Bhagat Singh, 405; Travancore National and Quilon Bank, 489; Rajaji, 538, I.N.A., 612, Nuremberg, 635-6  
 Tribune (of Lahore), 83  
 Tripartite Conference, 615-8  
 Triplicane, 158, 159, 426-7  
 Triplicane Literary Society, 1, 58, 126, 145, 163  
 Trivedi, Sir C., 665  
 Troops, alleged excesses in C.P., 585, 586; 602, 603, 612, 632, 665, 670, 671, 685, 686, 687-8, 723, 759  
 Trotsky, 496  
 Truman, Harry, 754, 757  
 Tuticorin, 188-9  
 Twenty-point programme, 799  
 Two Nation theory, 527, 533, 535, 615, 651, 669  
 Tyabjee, Miss, 386

- Tyabji, Abbas, 389  
 Tyabji, Badruddin, 46, 47-8
- United India, The, 130  
 United Nations, 602, 603, 615, 652, 667, 671, 682-3, 685, 755-6, 758  
 United Press of America, 639  
 United Press of India, 520, 615  
 University of Madras, 156, 426, 751  
 Untouchability, English, 430  
 Untouchables and untouchability See Harijans, uplift of
- Urban Land Ceiling, 789, 794  
 Usman, Sir Mahomed, 371, 414
- Vanchi Aiyer, 188  
 Varadachari, N S., 465, 751  
 Varadachari and Sons, 82  
 Varadarajulu Naidu, Dr P., 337  
 Vasudeva Aiyer, G.K., 489-90, 525, retires, profile, tribute, 731-2; letter to K. Srinivasan and his reply, 749  
 Vaswani, T L., 298  
 Vedaranyam Satyagraha. See Salt Satyagraha
- Veeraraghavachariar, M., one of the founders, 1; co-proprietor, looks after the management, 1; 3, life, 4; 5-8, Madras Corporation's election, 65; partnership with G. Subramania Aiyer breaks, 65, 67-8, 126, 80, presents address of welcome to Hume, 94; Madras delegates of Bombay session of Congress pass vote of censure on, 96; 104, sole proprietor, 126; reaction to severance of partnership, 126, view on progressive social legislation, 126-7; differences with G. Subramania Aiyer, K. Subba Rao on, 127-8, appeal to G. Subramania Aiyer, 128, a great organiser and manager, 128; V.S. Srinivasa Sastri on, 128, K. Vyasa Rao on, 128; non-interference with policy, 128; custodian of Congress prestige in Madras, 129, supported proposal for holding a session of Congress in London, 129; in Lord Ripon's diary, 129; differences and settlement with Subramania Aiyer, T.V. Seshagiri Aiyer and Norton arbitrate, 129; edits *Hindu* Nesan, 130; G. Subramania Aiyer's suit for defamation, 130; period as sole proprietor, 148, defamation suit, 153; effort to make *The Hindu* a limited company, 153; Manager of the proposed company, 154; scheme falls through, reasons for, 154; Silver Jubilee, on troubles and difficulties faced, 155; sells the National Press and *The Hindu* to Kasturiranga Iyengar 162; continues to be Printer and Publisher, 163; 164, leaves *The Hindu*, 164; passes away, editorial tribute, 165; offer of Editorship to V.S.S. Sastri, 310
- Venkasamy Row, Dewan Bahadur, 73  
 Venkatachari, A.G., 594, 751-2
- Venkatappiah, Konda, 434  
 Venkatarama Sastri, T.R., 415  
 Venkataraman, R., tribute to G. Narasimhan, 788  
 Venkataramani, K S., 206  
 Venkatasubbiah, H., 758, 778  
 Venkataswami Naidu, Dwaram, 558  
 Venkatesa Aiyer, A.K., 525, 731  
 Venkateswara Rao, M. (of Nuzvid), 182  
 Verghese, T M., 485-6,  
 Viceroy's Executive Council and Councillors, 192, first Indian to, 192-3; 199, 233, 257, 511-4, 521, 529, 530, 535, 542, 550-1, 552, 554, 565, 566, 581, 582, 587, 588, 593, 605-7, 611, 617, 620, 621, 624
- Victoria, Queen, Golden Jubilee, 50-1; 90, Diamond Jubilee, 104, 106, 108, 125, passes away, tribute, 150-1, story about her previous birth, 151, 189, 193, 195-6
- Victoria Students' Hostel, and Veeraraghavachariar, 165  
 Vidyarthi, Ganesh Shanker, 405  
 Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Mrs., 603, 612  
 Vijayaraghavachariar, C., 12, 13, 42, 164, 191, 202, 258, tribute to Kasturiranga Iyengar, 307, 311, 313, 318, 744  
 Vijayaraghavachariar, S.V. (S.V.V.), on nautch girls, 74, on Pronunciation, 159-60, 367-8, "On dreams", "Geography of Madras", 425-7; tribute on 60th birthday, 427, death, tribute, 428; tribute to A. Rangaswami Iyengar, 453; tribute to *The Hindu*, 524
- Vincent, Sir William, 542
- Violence, 175, 187, 197, 217, 229, 230-1, 242, 251, 254, 280, 286, 387, 389, 391, 412, 413, 533, 538, 553, 579, 581, 589, 623, 643, 648, 652, 664, 665, 669, 684, 705, 710, 715, 718, 734, 735, 758, 763, 767, 769, 795
- Vishindas, Harchandrai, 354  
 Viswanatha Aiyer (Reporter), 525  
 Viswanatha Aiyer, K.P., 366, 369, 384, 387, 457, 525, retires, tributes, profile, death, 727-8  
 Viswanathan, Tenpeti, 467  
 Visweswarayya, Sir M., 479
- Voters, 700-1, 724, 763-5, 766, 771, 799
- Vyasa Rao, K., 8, 11, on M. Veeraraghavachariar, 128; 139, on G. Subramania Aiyer, 143, 146
- Wadia, B.P., 211, 214, 316  
 Wage Board, Journalists', first, 788  
 Wages, 108, 792  
 Walking, 422, 584
- War, in Sudan, 50; in S. Africa, 120; Russo-Japanese, 160; Indo-China, 758-9, 765, 771, 778; Indo-Pakistan, First, 671, 682-3, 758, Second, 758, 760-1, Third, 758, 772, 774, 778; World War-I, 209, 211, 228-7, 236; 238, 239, 253-4, 346, 456, 680, 696, 700, 802, II, 203, 475-6, 494-6, 503, 505-10, 513-14, 520-1, 525, 536-41,

- 544, 548-9, 551-6, 562-4, 567, 573, 575, 576, 580-1, 583-5, 593-4, 596-7, 600-3, 605, 610, 624, 700, 732, 738, 747, 750, Editors' delegation to Malaya, 751-2
- Wavell, Lord, Viceroy, 556, 565, 582, 591, 594-5, 596, 601, Plan, 605, 608, 607, 609, 610, 611, 628, 640, 645, 646, on K. Srinivasan, 746-7
- Wealth, 703, 705, 706
- Weather chart and news, 745
- Webb, Alfred, 217
- Wedderburn, Sir William, 70, 95, 112, 131, 136, 217, 461
- Weekly Magazine, 731, colour, 781
- Welby, Lord, Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, 104, 105
- Welby, T. Earle, 214, 216, 239, 348
- Weldon, Sir Thomas, 63
- Welfare State, 704, 706, 707, 709
- Wells, H.G., 381, 426
- Wenlock, Lord, 86, G. Subramania Aiyer on, 107; letter to *The Hindu*, 154, on Veeraraghavachariar, 165
- White Paper, British Government's, 431-3, 443, 444, 448, on Integration of States, 683-4, 759
- Widows, remarriage: See Marriages; child, 77, 134; Home in Madras, 271
- Willington, Lord, Viceroy, 256, 258, 282, 298, 299, 330-1, admiration for S. Rangaswami, 348; 369, 412, 443, 578, 749
- Wilson, F.W., 394-6, 397-8, 404
- Wilson, Harold, 674
- Wilson, Maj. Gen. N.M., 560
- Wilson, President, 554
- Winterton, Earl, 485
- Women, 68, 69, uplift of, 76-7, violation by British soldiers, 112, 134, 219, 387, 390, 413, 465
- Women's page, 368
- Woodhead, Sir John, 604
- Woodroffe, Sir John, 378
- Woods (Engineer), 526
- World Press Achievement Award, for *The Hindu*, 783-4
- Wrenn Bennet and Co., 180
- Wyatt, Woodrow, 639
- Yahya Khan, 774
- Yerawada Jail, 388, 390, 392, 412, 415, 439
- Young India, 356
- Young Mens' Indian Association (Y.M.I.A.), Madras, 209
- Yule, George, 217
- Zafrullah Khan, Sir Mahomed, 529
- Zamindar of Kalahasti, 74
- Zamindar of Ramnad, 63-4
- Zamindari, Abolition Bill, 695, 697; squatting on lands, 695
- Zamindars, 230, 412
- Zetland, Lord, 470-3, 491-3

